

FREE

Kent on Sunday

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East Edition No 628

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We speak to Ukip's latest recruit as recriminations fly

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Banksy's art of publicity

Famous artist creates £500,000 work on scruffy seaside wall

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Reckless with our trust may haunt politicians

TRUST is one of life's most essential emotions. It provides us with people and places we can rely on and cling to when the rest of the world seems to be crumbling around us.

And on the whole we are a trusting bunch. Or, more to the point, we want to trust people; we want to have faith in them, whether that is friends and family or colleagues or team-mates.

Yet when it comes to those who run the country and wield huge influence upon us, we start to entertain doubt. What's more, we openly express those concerns with a worrying lack of confidence and trust in those we elect to Westminster.

It's a dangerous and unsettling mindset. But, again, we want to trust. We want to believe.

Which brings us to Mark Reckless and, apparently, a constant trickle of local councillors,

who have made the mighty leap from one political party they are elected to represent, to another they were not.

Highly principled, you may say. Or the worst type of betrayal.

But whatever your view, switching sides comes at a high credibility price. It's a bit like swapping your football team. If the boss isn't doing well, or not taking the team in the direction you want, you stick with it, you call for his head if necessary, but you remain true to your roots.

Should you opt, instead, to don a glory-hunter's hat and cheer on someone else, well, that stays with you.

People will remember. They may, just possibly, not entirely trust you won't do it again.

And if there is one thing we surely all know, it is that trying to regain trust once you've lost it is an incredibly difficult act to pull off.

The by-election will be fascinating viewing.



Editor **Chris Britcher**

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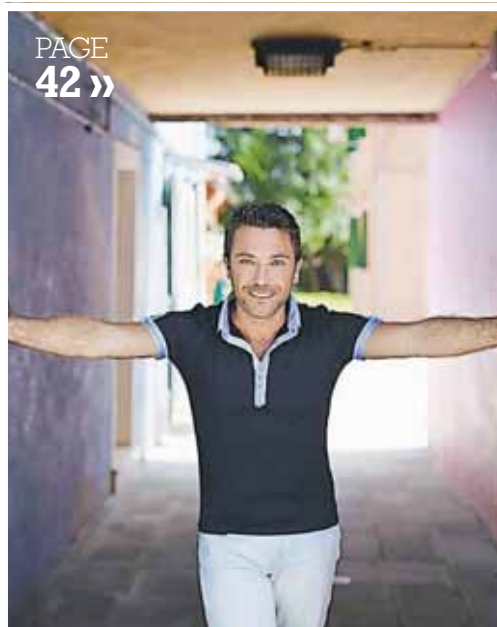
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HOW TO CONTACT US...

Publisher: Simon Irwin
Email simon.irwin@archant.co.uk

Editor: Chris Britcher
Email chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

Address: Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP

Editorial: News: 01233 653475

Sport/Leisure: 01233 653479

Email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

Advertising:

Jobs/Notices: 0845 671 4460

Business: 01233 653461

Email appointments@kosmedia.co.uk

Retail/Leisure/Motors: 01233 653461

Email sales@kosmedia.co.uk

Distribution: 01233 653470

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Ann Barnes awaits IPCC decision on crash report

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

THE Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) was expected to make an imminent decision, at the time of going to press, as to whether it would investigate a report into Kent Police and Crime Commissioner Ann Barnes.

It follows allegations made in the Mail on Sunday newspaper following a car crash she was involved in last month.

Mrs Barnes, while travelling in her Mercedes, hit another car and smashed through a fence following a crash in Princes Road, Dartford, on September 16.

The newspaper claims that Mrs Barnes failed to produce her insurance details when requested to do so at a local police station.

Mrs Barnes's office was keeping tight-lipped over the exact nature of the allegations but confirmed a report had been referred to the IPCC.

It will consider the report and then make a decision as to whether to launch a full investigation.

In a statement, her office confirmed: "The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)



INCIDENT: Ann Barnes will learn 'within days' whether the IPCC will launch a formal investigation

can confirm that the chair of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel was made aware of a referral from Kent Police following an investigation into a collision on September 16 in Princes Road, Dartford.

"In accordance with agreed protocols, the matter was passed to the monitoring officer at the OPCC for further consideration. The monitoring officer has subsequently referred the matter to the Independent Police Complaints

Commission. Due to the referral, the OPCC cannot comment any further at this stage."

Kent Police has confirmed investigations into the incident are on-going but that no-one has been charged or cautioned with any offence.

Mrs Barnes has been dogged by incident since being elected in 2012.

She is still suffering from the impact of taking part in a Channel 4 documentary that many described as, ironically, 'car crash'

TV as the commissioner struggled to explain her job role.

Meanwhile, the closing date for Kent on Sunday readers to pose their questions to Mrs Barnes has now passed.

We had dozens of emails and letters and have sent a selection to the police and crime commissioner to answer.

The full list of questions and Mrs Barnes's answers will be printed in an upcoming edition of this newspaper.

Relief as Gatwick 'goes back to the drawing board' on flight paths

GATWICK Airport is to reconsider controversial proposals to change its flight paths over west Kent – news that has been met with delight by those who had fiercely opposed it.

The airport in West Sussex had trialled different approaches to its runway over a six-month period earlier this year.

Known as the ADNID route, it was trialled on westerly departures and ended in August.

It was tested to gather data as part of wider work looking at how to use UK airspace more effectively and efficiently, as well as how to make the most of Gatwick's single-runway capacity.

It formed part of the Government's Future Airspace Strategy (FAS), which all airports in the UK will be required to implement by 2020.

It caused outrage in many parts of the west of the county – including Tunbridge Wells and parts of Sevenoaks – which suddenly saw a big increase in air traffic and resulting noise.

But this week Gatwick bosses

confirmed that it and the National Air Traffic Services (NATS) have agreed there will be no further changes until further work can be done, including another consultation.

Tunbridge Wells MP Greg Clark, who wrote to the airport last month opposing the plans, said: "I am very pleased that both Gatwick and NATS have agreed with my call to go back to the drawing board with these proposals as they have caused immense worry to my constituents in the west of Tunbridge Wells.

"Both organisations have confirmed that there will be no change to the flight path until further work, including adequate consultation with the community, has taken place."

A Gatwick spokesman said: "We will review all the data and feedback gathered from the trial and the consultation and publish an independent report of the consultation feedback later this year.

"We will then use the findings to re-visit our airspace change proposal and route designs next year."

Chetna blow as she exits the Great British Bake Off show

CHETNA Makan just missed out on securing a berth in the prestigious grand final of the Great British Bake Off after being knocked out in the semi-final.

The mother-of-two from Broadstairs had dazzled on the hit BBC TV show in recent weeks but was ultimately eclipsed by a strong line-up.

Judge Paul Hollywood, who lives near Canterbury, said: "She was

the weakest of the final four, but they were all exceptional."

Mrs Makan, who admitted she was relieved to finally be able to tell friends and family about how she had performed in the show, after being sworn to secrecy, moved to Kent 10 years ago after moving from Mumbai, where she was a fashion designer. The final, next Wednesday, will be competed by Luis, Richard and Nancy.

Father Christmas World gets rejected by town planners

ORGANISERS of a Christmas attraction in Tunbridge Wells who started selling tickets for the event before securing planning permission from the council are this week having to issue refunds after its plans were thrown out by council chiefs.

The Father Christmas World event was due to take place at the Salomons Estate in Southborough. But it was unanimously

rejected by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's planning committee this week amid concerns over traffic.

A spokesman for the firm Markerstudy, which was behind the scheme, said: "We have been forced to change our plans. Full refunds will be promptly given to all those who have purchased tickets. The whole situation is under review."



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Florida trip tab picked up by Paramount chiefs

THE company behind the huge multibillion pound Paramount resort in Swanscombe has agreed to pay Gravesham Borough Council's costs in processing and exploring the development.

The will include London Resorts Company Holdings picking up the tab of council fact-finding missions to resorts such as Orlando in Florida.

Council leader John Burden said: "I can assure the

residents of the borough that no taxpayer's money will be used to fund the visit which will help inform the debate going forward."

The ambitious park scheme is expected to create more than 27,000 jobs and attract millions of visitors, with a theme park and other major event venues at the 872-acre site.

It should open in the summer of 2019.



BOOST: £120m Western Docks boom

Bang out of order... the sausage that comprised almost 50% horse meat

By Molly Kersey

molly.kersey@archant.co.uk

JUST when you thought it was safe to tuck back into your favourite meat products, the prospect that you could be eating horse meat has re-emerged.

A food-import company was prosecuted this week after a Bulgarian sausage for sale in a Dartford shop was discovered to contain 46 per cent horse meat.

Thursday's conviction at Dartford Magistrates Court came after Kent Trading Standards officers bought the sausage from the shop in Market Street in October last year.

Subsequent examination by Kent Scientific Services – an arm of the county council – discovered that almost half of it was horse.

Further investigations found that the product, a Lukanka Chumerna sausage, had been imported by Expo Foods Limited, of Enfield, London.

The vacuum-packed food was manufactured in Bulgaria and la-



SAUSAGES: But as you know them?

belled as containing pork sausage meat.

It was in January last year that the horse meat scandal erupted when it was found that burgers on sale in supermarkets contained horse meat.

A range of meat products was removed from shelves across the UK and Europe. Since then, the meat industry went to great lengths to regain the trust of the public, insisting

that testing procedures had been significantly strengthened.

Despite this and the extensive media coverage, however, Expo Foods made no tests on the sampled product, which was imported in September 2013.

The company admitted in court a charge under the Food Safety Act that the product was not of the substance demanded.

It was fined £5,000 and an award of £2,500 made towards council costs plus a £120 surcharge

Richard Strawson, KCC Trading Standards manager, said: "We are obviously concerned that this product was found on sale in Kent.

"We are aware of the sensitivities among the public concerning eating horse meat and therefore feel our actions were necessary to ensure that they can have confidence that what they eat is accurately described."

Following the sample results, Expo Foods voluntarily withdrew the product in liaison with its local authority and the Food Standards Agency.

Hundreds of jobs created in port expansion

A £120 million investment into a massive overhaul of Dover Western Docks was confirmed this week.

It will create more than 600 jobs and protect 140 existing roles, port chiefs confirmed.

The move will look to position the docks as a major cargo port, freeing up capacity at the Eastern Docks, the main passenger ferry terminal, for further ferry use.

Firms are now being invited to tender for the construction contracts.

Tim Waggott, chief executive of the Port of Dover, said: "It represents a further investment of up to £120m in Dover and the employment prospects of current and future generations of local people over the next few years.

"The message is that we are 100 per cent for Dover, we are putting our money where our mouth is and we very much hope that this will give others the confidence to do the same.

"The studies have been done and the conversations have been had with our customers, with our community and with our staff. Now it is time for action. Now it is time to deliver for Dover."

The board said it represents an "initial and major part of the biggest single investment" made in the port by the board.

Marlowe shows that it's one in a million

CANTERBURY'S Marlowe Theatre has sold its millionth ticket since reopening less than three years ago.

The sales involved 970,000 in the main auditorium and 30,000 in The Marlowe Studio.

The millionth ticket was sold to Lesley Wren, of Herne Bay, who booked to see An Evening With Sir Roger Moore with her husband Alan.

As a thank-you for their support, Mr and Mrs Wren were invited to see One Man, Two Guvnors at the theatre and to meet the cast.

The venue opened three years ago following a redevelopment costing £25.6 million.

Since then, the theatre has attracted some of the country's leading touring companies, including the National Theatre, Royal Shakespeare Company, Glyndebourne on Tour, Matthew Bourne and the Philharmonia.

Theatre director Mark Everett said: "It has been hugely gratifying to see the new theatre achieve this success in such a short period of time."

Jail after 91-year-old robbed in the street

A TEENAGER who robbed and injured a 91-year-old woman has been jailed for years and four months.

The 16-year-old boy, who cannot be named for legal reasons, was sentenced for the two robberies at Maidstone Crown Court after pleading guilty.

During the first incident in July, he snatched the elderly victim's handbag as she was walking along an alleyway between Broadwater Down and Cobbetts Ride in Tunbridge Wells. It caused her to fall to the ground, hitting her face on the concrete and breaking her wrist.

A 60-year-old woman was also robbed in August as she made her way from the area of Showfields Road towards Linden Park Road.

The teenager told detectives he had targeted the eldest victim because she was frail and would not be able to fight him off or chase him. He said his motivation in both incidents was to get cash to buy cigarettes and cannabis and "have money to spend on having a good time with friends".

Arts complex hits the red to mark birthday

POPULAR community arts complex the Horsebridge Centre in Whitstable has marked its 10th anniversary by finally breaking even.

At an AGM this week for the centre, trustees and supporters were told by board chair Zoe Cloke and centre manager Liz Daone the centre had managed to climb out of the red for the first time in many years.

Mrs Cloke said: "We are really pleased with the figures. But we still have to be very diligent and we are now looking at ways to maximise the potential of our café and the new shop area whilst continuing to provide a good cultural and community service for the town.

"We still need to run our targeted fund-raising events to boost our income and enable us to operate seven days a week."

The meeting heard that the introduction of regular film screenings was helping to support the centre and to enrich the offering of art, music and comedy by bringing in new audiences.



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agenda

What will make next week's headlines...

Warning of delays over A2 major road works

MOTORISTS are being warned about delays on a busy stretch of the A2 that started this weekend and continue until December.

Work will take place along a six-mile stretch of the road at Canterbury between Brenley Corner, where it meets the M2, and Wincheap, for the A28.

The major repairs will involve

nine weekend closures of the coastbound carriageway.

Work should be completed, weather permitting, by December 1.

The coastbound carriageway will be closed from 8pm on Friday until 6am on Monday morning every weekend until it is complete.

A fully signed diversion will be in place via the A299 and A256



during the closures.

A public exhibition was held on September 16 with members of the project team on hand to answer questions from residents and motorists.

Special Monopoly board all set for the big reveal

A MONOPOLY set based on Canterbury goes on sale this week for the first time.

The special version of the popular board game is launched on the day of its release with a special event at the Beane Art Museum & Library in the city centre.

Canterbury was selected after a public vote – trumping

Tunbridge Wells, which came second, and the likes of Maidstone and Dover.

Familiar properties on the board will all be Canterbury landmarks but have been kept a tightly guarded secret.

It is expected the cathedral will be named 'Mayfair', the top-priced property. The launch takes place on Friday.

...also

Cast your food vote now

VOTING for Produced in Kent's Taste of Kent Awards 2015 continues this week after being officially launched on Wednesday.

To cast a vote, visit www.takeofkent-wards.co.uk.

The closing date for all votes is January 2. Winners will be announced in March.

County on TV road trip

A HOST of Kent locations will be featured on hit BBC TV show Antiques Road Trip this week.

Antique hunters will be seen travelling through Gillingham, Westerham and Rochester. The show is on BBC2, weekdays, at 4.30pm.

Bake Off star drives in

GREAT British Bake Off star Paul Hollywood will be the star turn at a special go-karting event at Chatham's Buckmore Park this week.

He will open the Henry Surtees Challenge on Wednesday, before taking to the track for a few laps.

Emin's bag for books

MARGATE artist Tracey Emin has designed a special bag for a campaign to get people to use their local bookshop.

It forms part of the Books Are My Bag awareness drive which begins this Thursday, October 9, and aims to promote local and chain booksellers in our towns.



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Banksy does his bit for art festival with creation of 'Art Buff'

By Maria Chiorando

maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk

A GRUBBY wall in one of Folkestone's less salubrious areas could now be worth £500,000 after it became home to graffiti artist Banksy's latest masterpiece.

It may not be the most obvious choice of surroundings, but the position of the piece – dubbed 'Art Buff' – gives an insight into the artist's mind. The painting, which shows an old lady wearing headphones leaning over an empty plinth, is daubed on the wall at the back of an arcade building in the town's Payers Park area.

With no homes or shops overlooking the area, and the only nearby security camera pointing in the opposite direction, the celebrated artist was able to complete the work without any eyewitnesses coming forward.

Similar works by the artist have sold for around £500,000 at auction.

Measures have been put in place to protect the work, including round-the-clock security and covering the piece with a perspex shield.

A Shepway District Council spokeswoman told KoS: "The council does not own the Banksy – it belongs to the owner of the building.

"We protected the piece with plastic but did not hire the security guard. "We hope the piece stays in the town, but it's up to the owner, who is currently deciding what to do with it."

The on-site security guard declined to give his name or say who employed him.

He said: "There is someone here guarding it all the time.

"There's been a lot of interest. The whole time I've been here, there has been a steady stream of people coming to take photos.

"It has been a mix of people."

Banksy's spokesman has issued a statement about the work, saying that "everyone can enjoy it".

It has certainly attracted a crowd, including a trio of men who, under the watchful eye of the security guard, discussed how the painting could be removed from the wall while pontificating on its meaning.

"I think it's like people looking for gold on the beach," one said, "as the woman is looking at nothing on the plinth."

Gayle Warne, from Hythe, also came to see it. She said: "I am an art lover, so when I heard about it I wanted to see it. This is the first Banksy I have seen in the flesh, so yes, I am very happy to see it and think it's great for Folkestone and Kent."

The piece coincides with the Folkestone Triennial art festival, which has already attracted such famous names as Yoko Ono.

The festival made headlines when £10,000 of gold bars were hidden on the beach by artist Michael Sailstorfer, causing a gold-run stampede.

On his website, under a photo of the piece, the artist wrote 'Part of the Folkestone Triennial. Sort of'.

A triennial spokeswoman said: "It is wonderful to know that Banksy has visited Folkestone Triennial and embraced the exhibition enough to contribute his own work to the creative landscape of the town.

"We hope to make this work a permanent addition to the Creative Quarter, for residents and visitors to continue to enjoy alongside all of the other fantastic artworks that have been created for this year's triennial."

Shepway councillor Jenny Hollingsbee said: "This is a tremendous opportunity for the people of Folkestone to see a Banksy original. It is another reason to be proud of Folkestone."

The last piece Banksy painted in the county was at Dungeness beach in 2010. The painting, which depicted a vulture with a petrol pump as its head, was swiped from the container on which it was painted. A replacement was vandalised last month.



PICTURE THIS: Banksy's mural in Folkestone created widespread interest

A GLOBAL MAN OF MYSTERY

SOME claim the notoriously secret artist is actually a Bristolian former public-school boy called Robin Gunningham, though this has never been confirmed.

His artwork is always painted or installed in the middle of the night and often takes the form of satirical murals, critiquing war and politicians.

He has experimented with other forms, though, notably an installation called Sirens of the Lamb, where a slaughterhouse

delivery vehicle was filled with stuffed toy animals and had a soundtrack of them screaming as it drove through New York's meatpacking district.

His work sells for hundreds of thousands of pounds, with pieces similar to Art Buff often valued around the £500,000 mark.

Specialist companies need to be called in to remove his work from buildings for sale, which can be quite a complex process involving chainsaws and chisels.

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IN A small room at the back of a building, dimly lit through a high window, I am waiting for Mark Reckless.

I feel like there should be more drama than this. After all, this is a man who has been under the glare of national and local media for the past three days, since he sensationally appeared on stage at the Ukip conference in Doncaster last Saturday and announced he was leaving the Tories to join the party.

No-one knew – not the Tory whips, not his party colleagues, not even his own chief of staff, Chris Irvine, who flicked over to the conference on TV from the Liverpool-Everton match and saw he was out of a job.

Since then, the former Rochester and Strood Conservative MP has been publicly disowned by his old party and labelled a liar, untrustworthy, “not worthy of being a Conservative” – and worse.

It all seems slightly hard to reconcile with the softly-spoken, unassuming man who walks into the room a couple of minutes later.

He looks nervous – as well he might. He speaks slowly, quietly, even stammering sometimes as he talks to me about his slow-burning decision to leave the Tory party.

The first inkling of disquiet came, he says, in 2012 when he was instrumental in the Government's defeat in Parliament in a vote on the EU budget.

Prime Minister David Cameron had wanted the budget to remain unchanged but 53 rebel Conservative MPs, along with Labour, defied him and voted for a cut. The budget has to be agreed by all member states.

It was not only the difference of opinion which opened a rift between the two, but Cameron's subsequent claim, according to Mr Reckless, that he would have cut the budget anyway – a “pretence” that he said meant he started to lose trust in his leader.

“It was an important moment because Parliament stood up, but it undermined my belief and confidence in David Cameron,” Mr Reckless said.

Then, at a meeting of the 1922 Committee of Conservative backbenchers in June, the father-of-two said he became even more convinced that Cameron was not serious about European reform.

Also on the committee was his close friend Douglas Carswell, the Clacton MP who left the Tories to join Ukip last month – and is expected to become the party's first elected MP in the by-election this week.

Cameron's stance on the EU referendum is that he wants to renegotiate the terms of Britain's membership before holding it. It has always been understood that this would involve taking powers back from Brussels.

But, according to Mr Reckless, Cameron seemed unenthusiastic about the idea of renegotiating Britain's position

“If he thinks he can make the other 27 EU countries unanimously agree to change how they operate just to suit us, I think that's fairly implausible”

Mark Reckless, on David Cameron's thoughts on Europe

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MAIN PLAYERS: Former MP Mark Reckless (main) has left David Cameron's Tory party for Nigel Farage's Ukip

Reckless decision or act of a brave, honourable man?

As the fallout over Mark Reckless leaving the Conservatives to join Ukip continues to rumble, **Sarah Linney** met the man himself to discuss the move that shocked Westminster

and instead seemed to believe that he could get new membership arrangements for all 28 EU countries.

“I thought David Cameron was going to use the lever of a referendum to get some serious powers back for Britain,” Mr Reckless said.

“But he said that would be almost like associate membership of the EU

– as if that was a bad thing rather than what his MPs want and what I think the overwhelming majority of British people would vote for.

“If he wants to renegotiate everyone's position, if he thinks he can make the other 27 EU countries unanimously agree to change how they operate just to suit us, I think

that's fairly implausible.

“He has set his face against what I think would be the best solution for our country, and both Douglas Carswell and I concluded he wasn't serious about European reform.”

A discussion on the European arrest warrant – a warrant valid throughout the EU which requires

“There have been a number of occasions when I thought I would probably do it and then not been sure. It was not a sudden decision – it's been difficult”

Mark Reckless, on decision that had been a long time in the making

member states to hand over criminals or suspects to the country asking for them – only served to undermine Reckless's trust further.

“We asked why we were about to opt back into justice measures we'd opted out of, and he gave an apparently passionate defence of the European arrest warrant,” he recalled.

“But I had heard from Chris Grayling that only weeks before he had been supporting Mr Grayling in arguing to come out of it.

“His stance now seemed like synthesised sincerity to me.

“He then started attacking Nigel Farage and Ukip, saying they couldn't win seats in Westminster and that Nigel Farage was a one-man band.

“And I can't remember if one of us thought this or said it, but it seemed to Douglas and me that those two concerns could be easily dealt with – by us.”

He said he felt the Tories had not delivered on other pledges, such as the decentralisation of power.

“I really believed in what they were saying about giving powers back to communities, getting rid of central government telling local government what to do, but it doesn't seem to have happened,” he added.

And so it was that, two months or so after the ill-fated committee meeting, Mr Reckless asked his friend Mr Carswell to arrange a meeting between him and Nigel Farage.

“I had spoken to him before, but I went to see him at his home in West-erham,” the 43-year-old recalled.

“He made a pitch to me about Ukip and he was very open and impressive.

“We spoke several times more after that, although after Douglas moved I had to be a little more cautious in my dealings with him.”

But he says he cannot remember the exact moment when he chose to leave the Tory party.

“I am not able to pinpoint that moment,” Mr Reckless said.

“There have been a number of occasions when I thought I would probably do it and then not been sure.

“It was not a sudden decision and it has been difficult. Many have been the sleepless nights when I have talked to my wife about the future of our children.

“Seeing Douglas do what he did, and the bravery and courage he demonstrated, encouraged me.

“When I joined the Conservative Party, there was a mass movement for change. I was clearly a Conservative and behind what we wanted to achieve, and I supported David Cameron for the leadership in 2005.

“But now, if you go to the conference this week, it is mainly PR people and corporate lobbyists. There are

very few ordinary members.”

Like all defections, Mr Reckless’ has been surrounded by accusations of lying, treachery and opportunism.

He told no-one about his decision to go, leaving the party whips to find out when they saw him on the Ukip stage on TV.

He had also told this newspaper just days after Carswell’s defection that he was not going to leave the Tories – a claim he had made elsewhere.

But he insists he still hadn’t made his decision then – and that he could not afford to let the Conservative Party guess his intentions.

“My mind was not firmly made up when Douglas moved,” Reckless said.

“I did not tell the party what I was going to do or let a hint of my intentions escape. You can’t discuss these things in advance. If I had, they would have poured the vitriol over me which you have seen this week.

“Even if I had deflected the question, they were monitoring everything I said and if that had been my consistent approach they would have been forewarned.

“I have many friends in the Tory party, both in Parliament and locally, and I am pleased so many have been in touch to say they want to remain my friends. But there are some for whom that’s not true.”

Unsurprisingly, the latter group seems to include David Cameron, who has been widely reported as calling Mr Reckless a “fat arse”.

He also claims to have received a text from Andrew Mackness, chairman of Rochester and Strood Conservatives, telling him: “Your family and children will be ashamed of your decision.”

“I believe that Ukip can get our country back. It is full of people who have passion and genuinely believe that they can change our country for the better”

Mark Reckless, on reason he defected to Nigel Farage’s party



VOTE, VOTE, VOTE: Mark Reckless will be standing for Ukip in the by-election for the Rochester and Strood seat

“How can he justify bringing my family and children into this? How can he speak for them? My family were right behind me,” a clearly appalled Mr Reckless added. (See Mr Mackness’ response in right column).

“I was hoping this was going to be a hard fought but clean campaign and it is just very sad to see so many nasty insults being thrown. Politics should be about more than that.

“The more I think about it, the more I see the reaction from the Tories. I think I have done the right thing.”

The by-election – which is likely to cost the Medway taxpayer somewhere between £125,000 and £200,000 – is expected to take place in the middle of November.

Mr Reckless is sitting on a 9,953 ma-

majority over Labour – Ukip did not stand against him in 2010 because of his Eurosceptic views – but the party has never won a seat in Westminster and he must know that he may well lose.

In which case, a promising political career might prematurely bite the dust. Mr Reckless is a member of the Home Affairs Select Committee and has been described as making an “outstanding contribution” by chairman Keith Vaz.

“Mark made his arguments in a powerful and effective way and we will miss him. The people making vile attacks on him are awful,” Mr Vaz added.

But Reckless believes he has a “fighting chance” of holding onto the

seat against Labour’s Naushabah Khan and a Tory candidate to be announced in the next couple of weeks.

“I believe that Ukip can get our country back,” he added.

“For too long we have been governed by the Westminster and Brussels elite who don’t have the people’s interests at heart.

“Ukip is full of people who have passion and who genuinely believe that they can change our country for the better.

“They don’t have a whipping system, so I am not always going to be straining against what the Tory party is trying to do – I can vote in the best interests of my constituents.

“I felt I couldn’t keep my promises to the electorate as a Tory.”

Tory councillor launches vitriolic attack on defector

THE chairman of the Rochester and Strood Conservative Association was on his way to the party conference in a narrowboat when he got the call to say Mark Reckless had joined Ukip.

Since then, Andrew Mackness has been laying into his former party colleague with a vitriol that would impress Joan Rivers.

“I was surprised, shocked and angry,” he told Kent on Sunday.

“Someone we trusted had lied to me, to his executive, right up until the last moment. He had said he was going to campaign against Ukip, he had left messages saying he would be at the conference, he was booked onto a campaigning bus on Sunday.”

Cllr Mackness admitted sending a text to Reckless saying “your wife and children will be ashamed of your decision” and told KoS that “they should be”.

“Any decent, honourable person is honest when they make difficult decisions. He should have had the decency and courage to talk through his concerns,” said Cllr Mackness, who confirmed he would not be the Tory candidate at the by-election.

“People, not just from within the party, from the general population, are appalled by his lack of decency.

“He is not a personable character, he lacks social skills, and he hasn’t a great deal of interest in the local population.

“All he has done is slap Conservatives who have worked hard for him for many years in the face. He doesn’t deserve to be an MP for any party.”

Asked about the departure from the party of councillor Chris Irvine, Cllr Mackness responded: “He has put a lot more weight on and eaten a lot more burgers. You have to do that when you join Ukip.

“He resigned from the party while in the process of suspension and expulsion was taking place.

“If he had not left he would have been expelled with my rather large size 10s, because he is Reckless’ agent and is supporting Ukip.

“But there’s always been a problem with him because he’s a maverick who did not share the views of Tory individuals in Medway.”

However, Ukip leader Nigel Farage defended Mr Reckless, saying: “He has done a very brave and principled thing and I have huge regard and respect for it.

“He has put his neck on the line in a by-election that could go either way. He has potentially made a big sacrifice for the principles we care about, which shows you how much he cares.”

He said he had not been certain that Reckless would actually turn up at the Ukip conference until he did.

“I have had people before who were going to defect and then didn’t on the last day. It’s a big decision for people to leave a party they have been working for,” Mr Farage added.

Labour’s by-election candidate will be Naushabah Khan, a former advisor to Labour MEP Peter Skinner.

Medway Labour leader Vince Maple said: “We are fighting as hard as we can for this seat. Tory supporters are fuming about the betrayal they have seen, and I think we have a very positive tale to tell.”



OUT OF THE BLUE: Chris Irvine

Closest ally was unaware of move to Ukip – but is glad it finally happened

HOURS after Mr Reckless’ defection, his chief of staff announced he was also leaving the party.

Chris Irvine, who represents Peninsula ward on Medway Council, says he has no plans to join Ukip and will remain as an independent councillor while he thinks about what to do next.

But he will certainly be supporting Ukip in the by-election – he will be Mr Reckless’s agent.

“I had been considering leaving for quite some time as I am very disillusioned with the lack of leadership and long-term thinking shown by the Medway Tory group. They are totally dysfunctional.

“The tipping point was when they approved the Lodge Hill development, which people are furious about.

“I had reached the point where I didn’t feel I could sit alongside any of these councillors any longer and be two-faced to the electorate I was supposed to represent.

“I am reflecting on my position and consulting my constituents to see what they think I should do.

“I don’t want to rush into anything as leaving the party was a big enough decision for me.”

Despite their close working relationship, Cllr Irvine was unaware of Reckless’s plans until he saw him

on the Ukip stage on television.

“That was the final thing. I thought, I’m going as well.

“It was a bit of a shock, but I knew he hadn’t been happy in the Tories for quite a few months, I think. He is very disillusioned and I think he has made a very honourable move.

“The way the party have reacted to Mark has been nothing short of disgraceful. I wasn’t expecting this outpouring of bile.

“I am very happy with my decision to resign and having seen how they reacted I don’t think they are fit to govern locally or nationally.”



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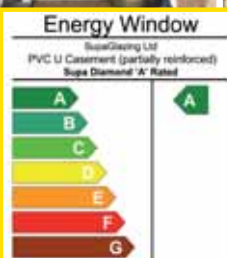
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Is it time great tattoo taboo in the workplace was exposed as discrimination?

Love them or loathe them, there's no escaping the increasingly popular fashion statement of the tattoo. But is having the body art likely to make you more or less employable? **Molly Kersey** reports

TATTOOS, it seems, are more popular than ever.

From the Prime Minister's wife Samantha Cameron (she has a dolphin on her ankle) to celebrities such as Cheryl Cole and David Beckham, the colourful body art is big, eye-catching, business.

Yet they continue to divide opinion.

Either you admire the artistic talent involved – and the bravery of those who undergo the hot needle to receive them – or they are a sure-fire way of igniting an immediate negative first impression.

So with the rise in the art form and the increasing competition for jobs, a debate is raging over the possible negative impacts of having a visible tattoo in securing – or remaining in – employment.

In short, is having an obvious tattoo likely to see a large cross immediately go against your name, regardless of your talents?

Research by a senior academic last year discovered having a tattoo can reduce your chance of getting a job after a number of employers were quizzed about their attitudes.

Dr Andrew R. Timming of the school of management at the University of St Andrews in Scotland, said: "Most respondents agreed that visible tattoos are a stigma."

One woman manager told him that "they make a person look dirty". Another male manager told him "subconsciously that would stop me from employing them".

Another male manager said "tattoos are the first thing they [fellow recruiters] talk about when the person has gone out of the door".

And if they're talking about that, they are not discussing your talents, or otherwise, for the job you want.

There has even been talk that those with tattoos should be protected under the Equality Act 2010 – much the same way as judgements cannot be made on employees due to their sexuality, race or religion.

Amanda Okill is an employment law specialist. She explained: "Assumptions based on appearances may be unfair and inaccurate and very likely misguided and baseless."

"Things like tattoos are often perceived as 'repugnant' or 'unsavoury', but the law doesn't protect individuals from general assumptions others make about them."

"Most employers have a dress code and want employees to reflect a certain image, particularly if they are dealing directly with customers, and this isn't unlawful."

And it's difficult not to understand the view of the potential employer keen to employ a future ambassador of the company, not wanting to hire someone who – rightly or wrongly – will emit an image before they've even opened their mouths.

Not, fortunately, that it seems a major problem so far.

Jo James, is chief executive of the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce which represents businesses across the county.

She agrees that as society becomes more "liberal" it affects the attitudes of employers.

But she warns a tattoo may simply prove incompatible with some roles.

She explained: "I don't think it's such a big issue as it used to be."

"At the end of the day, tattoos are far more commonplace now and if employers stop employing people because they have a tattoo they would really be cutting down their options."

"I have had somebody mention it to me, but it was the employee themselves who felt quite conscious about the fact they had a tattoo. I have never had employers say to me that it's a problem."

"Your employees are the window to your business and I think that's the key thing to remember. But it's not just about them having something on their arms, it's about the whole appearance."

“ Most employers have a dress code and want their employees to reflect a certain image, particularly if they are dealing directly with customers, and this isn't unlawful. ”

Amanda Okill, employment law specialist from Kent law firm



"If the rest of their appearance is very presentable, you could overlook the tattoo."

"We can't generalise that it's all employers or jobs, but there can be cases where within certain industries it's about image and maybe that's not an image that fits with the image of the company."

"But on the whole I think employers very much take the view that actually it's about the overall package and overall appearance."

Anecdotally, there are a growing number of cases where staff with tattoos have been told to at least cover up.

Kiri Babbage, of Dover, attracted unwelcome attention in her former job as a sales adviser at a phone store. She explained: "I was told the tattoos on my wrists had to be covered in plasters."

"I also saw a colleague get in trouble because his arm tattoo could be seen through his shirt."

Adds Charlotte Crompton, of Folkestone: "I nearly missed out on a managerial position at a clothing store I worked for when concerns were expressed about my tattoos."

Amid concerns there is no legal protection for those with tattoos, several online petitions have sprung up, aiming to tackle the discrimination that tattooed people may face.

Movements such as Tattooed And Employed have also aimed to address misconceptions that still surround tattoos, inviting people who have both visible body art and employment to share their pictures and stories on its Facebook page.

Lawyer Amanda Okill, from law firm Furley Page, warns against employers thinking they can make rash decisions.

She explained: "It may not be as cut and dried as it seems," she said.

"It's not a million miles away from the recent debate on the legal status of obese people and whether they should be protected from discrimination because of their size."

MAKING THEIR MARK: More and more people are getting tattoos

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INFORMED: Legal expert Amanda Okill (left) and business chief Jo James

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"Both issues question the extent to which the law should protect employees from prejudices based on appearances."

As the law stands, neither the sporting of a tattoo nor obesity are protected by equality legislation.

However, the Act does prevent discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics, which include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

"So in short, unless an employee's appearance can be linked to a protected characteristic, an employer can object to it," Ms Okill said.

"If, however, a tattoo is the manifestation of a sincerely-held religious belief and practice...the employee could assert their religion as the protected characteristic and the rejection of them as a job applicant on this basis

as direct discrimination."

Earlier this year, a consultant in Milton Keynes got the boot after a 4cm tattoo of a butterfly on her foot contravened a 'no visible inking policy' her employers had. While a waitress in Yorkshire was also shown the door after customers in the restaurant she worked objected a tattoo on her arm.

Alison Palmar, development manager at the Federation of Small Businesses Kent and Medway, said: "To be honest, more businesses are more concerned about issues such as reliable broadband access and employees having the right skills, not about what they look like."

■ **What do you think? Do you have tattoos or do you oppose them in the workplace?**

Join the debate and share your views. Write to The Editor, KoS, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PP. Or email us at editorial@kosmedia.co.uk



Body art should not paint wrong picture

AS someone who has been lucky enough to have tattoos and at the same time find employment with little difficulty, I feel lucky, **writes reporter Molly Kersey.**

They have never posed an issue and the employers I have had from the age of 18 have all seemed fine with them.

But I can't help but feel worried that it would take just a change in policy for me to potentially lose a job or be confined to wearing long sleeves at all times, sweltering in the height of summer to hide the – surely innocuous – daisy chain on my wrist.

Thankfully, misconceptions and prejudices surrounding

tattoos appear to be slowly but surely disappearing.

Quite right, too, because we are more than capable of doing the jobs for which we are qualified.

Tattoos are a way that I have chosen to express myself – it's the same as having my hair a certain style or wearing particular clothes or jewellery. They are something I put thought into and for which I saved up for. They don't make me, or other people who have them, irresponsible, untrustworthy or unprofessional.

Tattoos have been around for centuries and are creative and artistic. When they are done well, they really do look beautiful.

While I have heard arguments for not allowing them in the workplace, none of them ring true for me.

I think everyone can accept the fact that tattoos that are offensive or inappropriate are not ever going to be OK, while allowing visible tattoos in the workplace doesn't mean that people will start running around the office with racist symbols on their foreheads.

But, let's face it, if someone has gone to the time and effort of having something like that embedded into their skin, there are probably much bigger problems at play than the fact they like a bit of body art.

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How to make smokers see through the fog and stub out the habit

The national Stoptober campaign started this week – a now annual effort to cut down the number who continue to smoke. So just how do you get through to a modern-day smoker? **Molly Kersey** takes a look at the issues

IF THERE is one thing smokers find difficult to stomach, it is surely being told they should stub out their habit.

It's a knee-jerk reaction fuelled by the nicotine and chemical blend they are addicted to and human nature's desire to not be told what to do.

All of which has left health chiefs with a tricky task for what should be, especially in this day and age, a relatively simple sell.

After all, stopping smoking eases your bank balance, stops you constantly being surrounded by the smelly fog of stale smoke and dramatically reduces the health risks of which so much has been made.

By the time you factor in the joys of a cigarette in a cosy pub have long since been outlawed, ditto smoking in anywhere with central heating as standard (other than your own home) and it appears a bit of a no-brainer. And we haven't even touched upon the increasing sense of being a social outcast by lighting up in this day and age.

Yet underestimating the power of the addiction and the psychological crutch it becomes, is done at your peril.

So Stoptober – the uncomfortably named, now annual, campaign which started on Wednesday faces a tough task despite its simple premise.

A FORMER SMOKERS VIEW...

SMOKING is an odd habit at the best of times. It defies common-sense and logic and runs directly against the basic human instinct for self-preservation.

But what the non-smoker cannot understand is that a combination of nicotine, tobacco and a mish-mash of other chemicals tricks your mind. It confuses it amid a fog of need and bloody-mindedness. Give up smoking, it re-wires your brain to say, and you'll miss out on something to relax you, a key tool for socialising, and something to do with your hands.

All nonsense, you only discover once you quit, but utterly set in stone when hooked.

And for that reason, I took a

perverse pride in puffing away when there was a No Smoking Day, and I would probably have smoked myself until I threw up to mark Stoptober. It makes no sense, but your brain is not operating under normal circumstances - it is being chemically altered. There really is a little goblin in there sending out false messages.

The smoker, of course, is an odd animal. They pick up a habit which to start off with, involves puffing away on something which will make you feel sick for ages.

Yet such is the bite of the chemicals, you'll go back for more soon after. It seems fun to start off with, but, rest assured, you will hate yourself for it eventually. If

only for the fact it will drain the life not only out of you, but your bank balance. Oh, and despite what you may think, no-one will think you look cool. Really.

I gave up smoking 18 months ago and have never felt better. If I feel a wobble, I dabble with one of the new e-cigarettes. They may not be completely safe - they have nicotine in them after all - but their hold over me is minimal, I rarely long for them, they cost about £4 for a whole week and, fingers crossed, the health impact is barely noticeable.

Whatever, it's certainly a whole lot better than throwing my money and life into an ashtray.

Chris Britcher

It calls on smokers to stop lighting up just for the month of October. The idea being that if you can manage four weeks, the chances are you'll continue the good work. Or, at least, realise that it can be done.

Those who manage a month are, claims those behind the campaign, five times more likely to kick the habit for good.

So if you're pondering whether or

not to take the plunge – or persuade a loved one to do so – what are the statistics you need at hand?

Arguably, the thought that by paying for a smelly, high-cost habit which will eventually kill you or leave you with a debilitating illness, should be reason enough.

But with an estimated 246,071 smokers in the county - that's some 20.9 per cent of the Kent population,

a figure which is slightly up, worryingly, on last year – treating smoking-related illnesses with our county's hospitals is bending the public purse to the tune of £77 million. That could be far better spent bolstering services which are already facing funding reductions.

The good news, of course, is that help is at hand – all the smoker has to do is ask.

Commissioned by Kent County Council, which now has responsibility for public health issues, the Kent Community Health NHS Trust (KCHT) has been offering year-round support to help people quit smoking as well as running a series of Stoptober quit clubs.

Graham Thomas, the stop smoking manager for KCHT, said: "It can be tough to quit smoking, but you don't have to go it alone.

"You're up to 10 times more likely to quit with our support. If a quit club isn't your thing, we also offer one-to-one sessions with trained advisors who can help you.

"More than 60,000 people in Kent have quit with our support and many of our clients say it was easier than they thought it was going to be."

And, ultimately, that's the key message worth remembering. The first few days are tough... but it gets easier from there on in.

As well as promoting services to help people kick the habit, KCC has also signed up to government consultations which are aiming to introduce plain packaging on cigarette packets and banning smoking in cars which have children as passengers.

Last year there was a 10 per cent

Are e-cigarettes the secret weapon in the fight to cut down the number of smokers?

THE dawn of Stoptober has helped to reignite the debate over electronic cigarettes.

Battery-powered, users inhale a water vapour containing nicotine and the flavour of their choice.

Without any tobacco or the smell of traditional cigarettes, they are becoming increasingly popular alternatives – especially as the liquid flavours are just a fraction of the cost.

They have gained cautious support from many health professionals, who argue that although they may not be completely safe, they are certainly safer than combustible cigarettes or tobacco.

A spokesperson for Medway Council's public health team said: "E-cigarettes used alongside support from a trained stop smoking practitioner is likely to improve a smoker's chances of quitting completely.

"It is recommended that quitting all forms of nicotine is the best option for smokers. However, e-cigarette use is increasing in smokers wanting to quit. This is particularly the case among smokers who want to reduce the health risks associated with smoking or to save money.

"Whilst data is still being collected on the effectiveness of e-cigarettes, there is a growing amount of evidence that suggests that e-ciga-

rettes can have a beneficial impact in reducing cravings and the number of cigarettes smoked."

However, others have noticed significant downsides to using them.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and British Medical Association (BMA) have both expressed concerns about the devices – known as vaporisers – and professionals have worried they could act as a 'gateway' or normalise smoking cigarettes.

John Dicey, worldwide managing director and senior therapist at Allen Carr's Easyway, a stop smoking clinic which has a centre in Maidstone, said: "Our research indicates that most people who use e-cigarettes also continue to smoke and in doing that any health benefits of using them are lost.

"Someone smoking even three or four cigarettes a day means the harm deduction side of it is destroyed.

"From our point of view it's much easier if people just stop completely.

"Most of the reports are that where people used to smoke when they could and not smoke when they couldn't, they were smoking when they could and vaping when they couldn't, and actually taking in more nicotine than ever before.

"Before too long they just realised they would rather stop."



GROWING: The market in e-cigarettes - the above known as vaporisers - is demonstrating a real shift in smoking

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ing service and the council is keen to tackle the problem further.

A key target is to nip in the bud those taking up the habit in the first place – especially the under-19s for whom smoking continues to carry an image of teenage rebellion and a rite of passage for many.

In line with Public Health England's recommendations, the council is trying to stop people smoking in the first place, help them quit if they do fall into its trap, and de-normalise the habit by making homes, cars and family spaces smoke free.

Six areas – Ashford, Canterbury, Dover, Gravesham, Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells – have shown a reduction in smoking levels, and Dover has seen a significant drop of 4.5 per cent.

Shepway, however, has seen the greatest increase in the number of people who smoke, rising from 20.9 per cent in 2013 to 27.1 per cent, an increase of 6.2 per cent.

Overall, the county is slightly

“Last year, 20,332 people across Surrey, Kent and Sussex signed up to quit smoking through Stoptober which has proved to be a fantastic platform”

Dr Graham Bickler, director from Public Health England

Pensioner proves it's not too late to start stopping

TERRY Snell, a 67-year-old retired fire officer from Maidstone, smoked 25 cigarettes a day before deciding that enough was enough.

Since quitting last year, he said that his life has changed for the better. He has helped his partner to quit too and hopes to encourage others to follow suit.

“I stopped when I was about 30 for a few years and then I started again when I was about 35, and went from 35 right up until I stopped last year.

“I packed up work and I was trying a bit of exercise on a push bike and found I was getting tighter breathing and coughing and spluttering, and I thought the best thing I can do is pack up smoking before smoking packs me up.

“I feel far, far better. My sense of smell has come back, I can taste more, I have got more energy.

“I am still coughing and am told

this could go on for the next three years as my lungs are now getting rid of all the gunge. I still feel better for it.

“I was prescribed tablets, they did a 12-week course in that. I was about six weeks into it when I thought - I'll see what happens with not going any further with them. Then it was all down to willpower.

“As far as I am concerned if I can get one other person to stop smoking and lengthen their life then I have got a result.

“You've got to say to yourself 'let's pack these things up'. If I can do that the chances are I may well live another five or six years and I'd much rather do that and see my great grand children than not.

“You've got to have a positive idea of what you'll gain and why you want to do it. Just be totally positive about it, have a goal and go for that goal.

“It's in the mind, not the body. If I can do it then anyone can.”

above the average when it comes to the number of smokers.

The high numbers make the Stoptober campaign more important than ever.

Graham Gibbens, KCC cabinet member for adult social care and public health, said: “This is a great oppor-

tunity to help those who want to quit and encourage others too.

“Smoking is no laughing matter though, and the health dangers associated with this have been well publicised. We are lobbying hard to address key issues around smoking and there is also a fantastic range of help

and support available to people who want to quit and I'd urge anyone who wants to give up, to sign up.”

Dr Graham Bickler, director of the Public Health England centre for Kent, Surrey and Sussex, said: “Last year, 20,332 people across Kent, Surrey and Sussex signed up to quit smoking

through Stoptober which has proved itself to be a fantastic platform for people to quit and offers all the support that smokers may need to take the first step to stopping for good.”

■ To find out more information about the Stoptober campaign visit stoptober.smokefree.nhs.uk.



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Labour of love sees Darling Buds



PICTURESQUE: Mr Coulsen bought the farm in Pluckley for £1.35 million

When Simon Coulsen saw ramshackle farm from much-loved TV show was up for sale he had to buy it, writes **Chris Murphy**

IT KEPT millions of us glued to the screens during the 1990s, as the television version of HE Bates' classic *Darling Buds of May* enchanted a new generation.

What's more, with HE Bates spending much of his life in Little Chart, and the filming of the show taking place in and around the village of Pluckley, near Ashford, it was particularly embraced by those in the county.

Now the site, which comprises of four buildings and was used as the home of Pop and Ma Larkin and their family, can be your holiday destination.

Current owner of what was known as Buss Farm – and now Darling Buds Farm – is Simon Coulsen, 43, who snapped the place up for £1.35 million after hearing devotees of the show still make pilgrimages to its doorstep.

The imposing site comes complete with traditional Kentish oast house.

The programmes, based on Bates' 1958 novel, were made between 1991 and 1993 starring David Jason and Pam Ferris, as well as giving a young Catherine Zeta-Jones her big break.

Four series were made of the popular ITV programme.

Now the businessman and self-confessed fan of the show has created a self-catering destination – which can be yours from around £700 a week.

Mr Coulsen, who runs marketing training courses for would-be entrepreneurs, said: "I grew up in the Mopham and Gravesend areas, always loved the show and fancied an escape to the countryside.

"Around about six years ago I bought a barn conversion in the area, really because of the show.

"While living there, I went along to a classic car show that takes place at the Darling Buds farm a couple of times.

"Looking around, I thought 'what a waste'. The farm had been neglected and buildings were falling down and rotting away.

"I thought then it could be some sort of tourist attraction.

"Some years later I saw it was up for sale and thought it would be great to buy it and do something with it.

"So I viewed it and saw it was in a bit of a state. The oast, which is in the opening titles of the show, was under water because the back wall had cracked and there were problems of drainage on the land.

"One of the out-buildings had a 1960s mainframe computer in it as the previous owner was a bit of a geek and was in IT. Other buildings had cracks that you could put your fist in to.

"A lovely Tudor barn was stuffed floor to ceiling with old junk and literally falling down.

"I saw past all of the mess and thought I would give it a punt. I bought it, and then had a year of fun with the planners to get permission and go-ahead on it.

"That came through in January this year. From then we got cracking on getting the oast ready for the car show in July; the cart lodge opened in August; and I am currently working on the barn to turn it in to a house for me.

"That move will free up the Larkin's farmhouse which will be available from next Easter.

"It has all been a big undertaking. On top of what I bought it for, I am spending as much again in converting all the buildings."

When asked if he did it just to make a profit or if it was all just part of a romantic long-term love affair, he said: "A bit of both. I think it will pay dividends in the long run, but arguably you could have taken the same money and made a profit quicker doing something else with it.

"This is a unique piece of history and what price do you put on that?"

"It is a bit of a labour of love – it may take 20 or 30 years to make some money back on it, but what a lovely place to live in the meantime."

Prices for the various self-catering units start at £695 to £995 a week.

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Every fancied running away to join the circus? **Caroline Read** ventures under the big top to ask one of Kent's leading circus operators how it continues to survive in today's digital world...

FOR 10 months of the year, businessman John Lawson is a very difficult person to get hold of.

If he's not on the road with a convoy of trucks and trailers, he's busy setting up or taking down a big top, making numerous phone calls or even occasionally donning a clown's wig and make-up.

But for Mr Lawson this is just a way of life.

Having inherited his father's business in his early 20s he very quickly learned that it's not all fun behind the scenes.

His father was the fascinating 'Captain' John Lawson and the family business in question was John Lawson's Circus, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year.

Mr Lawson explains how one of his father's many unusual interests sparked the foundation of one of only two Kent-based circuses in the 1970s.

"This was always my Dad's dream rather than our generation as such," he says.

"My Dad, who's long since died, was a really interesting bloke. In his time he was a Royal Marine, a private detective, a writer for MGM.

"But later in life he joined Gerry Cottle's Circus; his main interest back then though was the animals to be honest.

"When he got there he was noticed because he spoke well and they didn't have a ringmaster at the time. They said 'you'd be a good ringmaster' and he got landed with that job.

"And from there he started his own show."

At the time his father set up the circus, Mr Lawson was only 11 so he wasn't born into it like so many circus families are. In fact he had a rather conventional upbringing: the family lived in Golden Green, near Tonbridge, and he attended the super-selective Judd School.



Son is happy clowning around to keep family name in the spotlight

"I had the advantage of having a good education at Judd, which is something a lot of circus people don't have," he explains.

"It's better now, of course, but in the old days you really struggled to get a good education. Nowadays, with computers and the national curriculum, wherever circus children are in the country they can catch up, just like they would if they were in one school all-year-round."

But even though he had no real intention of following in his father's footsteps, Mr Lawson found himself helping out at the circus more and more frequently.

"We all pitched in and ended up getting more involved. It's just what you do with a family business really. Whether it was a family butcher's shop, a pub or a circus, I'd have been expect-

ed to help out. My Dad died when I was quite young so I took over in my early 20s and I've been running it ever since. I think I'd always have come back to it, even if I had gone off and done something else at first. I do enjoy it – it's a way of life."

To say that it came from humble beginnings would be an understatement.

It was some years before Captain John Lawson could afford a tent of any kind, and when it did eventually come, it was a second-hand flower show marquee.

"The first show my Dad ever did was long before we had a big top.

"We did a few sports halls over the winter season and the first one was in Hastings, Christmas 1974. Then we did some outdoor shows at things like galas and festivals.

"There used to be a lot in the 1970s; businesses would have family fun days for their employees – all the mining communities would have these lavish days for their workers. We were paid to put an outdoor show on for them.

"We did that for a few years and then eventually my Dad got enough money together to buy an old flower show white marquee, which we used as a big top.

"We'd put on shows at little village greens and recreations grounds around Kent: all the tiny little places. It was a different world and people were always generally pleased to see us."

It was indeed a different world. With only three channels available on old-fashioned television sets, no home computers and mobile phones beyond most people's wildest imagination, live entertainment and good old family fun used to be high on people's agendas.

"There weren't the great television choices that people have these days," Mr Lawson says.

"With laptops and mobile phones people have so much entertainment these days, at their fingertips. It's changing all the time. You can hire a film now with the press of a button and watch it anywhere.

"In those days people were probably a little less sophisticated and there wasn't much entertainment about, so the circus was very popular touring round all the little communities. The circus coming to town was a real event."

Much has changed in 40 years and Captain John Lawson, who died in 1985, probably wouldn't recognise the world now. Animal acts are a thing of the past and circus performers

these days have to vie with computer games to gain the attention of the younger generation.

But Mr Lawson, who now lives in Smarden, insists the circus has changed with the times too and with a high demand for tickets, he can prove it hasn't lost its magic.

They perform at 60 venues a year, with 500 individual performances.

"Our show, I'm glad to say, has improved a lot since those early days. This year we've got some fantastic Ukrainian artists and I watch their act most nights if I'm here because it's unbelievable.

"I think entertainment has become so sophisticated that people don't often see any live entertainment anymore. And therefore we get a good turn out because they want that experience. It's gone full circle if you like.

"We get a lot of parents keen to bring their children to the circus because they worry about them sat in front of a computer all day. It doesn't offend anybody; you can bring the whole family from tiny kids to the grandmas – and there's something about it that everybody will love."

What John Lawson's Circus prides itself on is that it has remained small and intimate.

It won an award as the best small circus in the country and can seat up to 450 in comfortable bucket seats. Unlike its early days, everything is state-of-the-art and the emphasis is on comfort and safety.

A real family venture, the business also boasts Mr Lawson's younger sister – who used to be a juggler but works behind the scenes now – and his brother-in-law, ringmaster Attila En-

“I think entertainment has become so sophisticated that people don't often see any live entertainment anymore. And therefore we get a good turn out because they want that experience”

John Lawson, on why he thinks circuses continue to be a huge attraction for families

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BALANCING ACT: John Lawson's Circus is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, one of only two Kent-based circuses when it began

resz. Mr Endresz, originally from Budapest, is a seventh generation circus artist.

The younger generation, who travel with them, are also showing a keen interest in joining the business. Mr Lawson's son is particularly interested in the logistics; putting up the tent and using the forklift to move heavy equipment – all of which is an important part of the job.

"We're there for three days and we arrive in the evening and everything has to go up; the tent, the seating, the lighting.

"My son's interested in that side of things. Whether he'll ever be a performer I don't know but it's an equally important job. If the circus isn't ready on the first night there's no show."

And everyone is expected to pitch in. Only recently Mr Lawson stepped into the role of the clown for two months when they were let down by the one they had booked.

Getting let down by an artist is something that happens from time to time with the high turnover of seasonal circus performers.

"It's a bit worrying that only about 10 or 15 years ago there were a lot more British circus performers but now they're mostly Eastern European really.

"I know the old Communist countries used to put a lot of money into the circus; they considered it an art form, like ballet and opera, and set up circus schools to train loads of people up.

"That funding was withdrawn when everything collapsed so they were looking for work. It's great, but they do just do the season and leave so the artists are constantly changing.

"Mind you there are a few circus skills schools that have been set up in England these days so hopefully that'll lead to more home-grown performers."

But it's health and safety that has had the biggest impact on what circuses can and can't do over the past couple of decades. In some extreme cases Mr Lawson has had council health and safety assessors suggesting aerial performers wear hard hats during their act.

"And, of course, under the Labour government we had licensing for circuses and that was a real pain," adds Mr Lawson.

"We had to get a new licence for every venue we went to so we had all the forms to fill out in advance and we had to contact the local police station, environmental people and all that. That was a real nightmare.

"That's changed again now, but there's still



an awful lot more admin and business than there was when we first set up the circus.

"I spend all winter booking all our sites for the following year and getting the health and safety sorted. It's a changing world for everybody, but it has made our business that much harder."

Although they now tour the length and breadth of the country, John Lawson's Circus will always call Kent home. From their origins performing at small fetes and then on to recreation grounds at some of the smallest villages across the county, they are a much loved part of many people's childhood memories of Kent.

"What's great is that we go back to places like Bearstead every year and people who came along to see a show as kids are bringing their children now," says Mr Lawson.

"There's a real nostalgia about the circus; it's something from your childhood that you want to share with the next generation of your family. I don't see that changing any time soon."

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Cameron needs reality check over seven-day surgery pledge, say GPs

THE traditional corner shop has been doing it for years, but now the Conservatives want to ensure our doctors' surgeries are open all hours... or at least 12 hours a day.

Prime Minister David Cameron made the announcement at the party conference this week, saying surgeries would be open seven days a week between 8am and 8pm by 2020 should the Tories be elected.

Mr Cameron says the move will put the "family doctor service back front and centre of the NHS" and take the pressure off already over-stretched accident and emergency departments.

But local GPs have denounced the promise as "unachievable" and said the amount of money pledged will not go far enough to fund it.

One told KoS this week that even if surgeries were open at weekends, he didn't think people would flock.

Pilot schemes have been under way since earlier this year, and with another £100 million invested, the new hours will be available to 10 million patients countrywide next year.

GPs will also take responsibility for individual patients as part of a new GP contract being launched by the organisation NHS Employers, which works with employers within the health service.

However, there have already been warnings about the ramifications of implementing the pledge.

The chief inspector of GPs says 200 surgeries across the nation are facing closure because of poor care.

And earlier this year, the Royal College of GPs warned it would take an extra £1bn and 10,000 extra GPs to provide seven-day access.

It is hoped GPs will form larger groups to provide the extra cover, plus some of the consultations could be done by email or video calls. This, they say, will enable longer face-to-face time for more complex consultations.

Repeated research has shown that better access to GPs is a major gripe of patients, who are angry at long waiting times for appointments.

Mr Cameron said: "People need to be able to see their GP at a time that suits them and their family. That's why we will make sure everyone can see a GP seven days a week by 2020."

And he added: "We will also support thousands more GP practices to stay open longer, giving millions of patients better access to their doctor."

“People need to be able to see their GP at a time that suits them. That's why we will make sure everyone can see a GP seven days a week by 2020”

David Cameron, during his speech at Tory conference

The Prime Minister's bold promise at the Conservative Party conference that surgeries will open every day, 8am to 8pm, by 2020 grabbed the headlines. But it has got temperatures rising for those doctors already under pressure and who will be expected to deliver the service, writes **Chris Murphy**



OPEN ALL HOURS:
GP surgeries will be expected to offer a seven-day service under Tory pledge

"This is only possible because we've taken difficult decisions to reduce inefficient and ineffective spending elsewhere as part of our long-term economic plan."

The five-year costing for this extra service will be about £400m.

But Nick Keyte, managing partner at Sydenham House Surgery in Ashford, said this was simply an election promise that "is unachievable".

He said: "It is a political nonsense he [Cameron] is pushing because of the election."

Mr Keyte said the majority of his practice's patients are elderly or young mothers with children who will not want to make weekend ap-

pointments. Plus those working who are sick won't be at work so can make weekday appointments.

He said: "If you questioned the public in the street, they will all say they would like to see their doctor at any time. But they don't come."

"So you are spending almost half a billion pounds for a service that has only a small demand."

"It will be down to a very small number of people who will want to use this service."

"I have a group of practices and we open Saturday mornings. There is some demand, but on the whole most of those patients would be happy to come along on a weekday, too."

"What this money needs to be spent on is providing better services where people really need them."

"We are all living longer and the needs are growing. To put it bluntly, people dying from heart attacks didn't cost the NHS much money."

"But as medicines get better, people are needing more and more medical treatment for longer periods, and this is where the money needs spending."

"Things won't be solved by opening GP surgeries at a ridiculous cost for what will be a minority. It will be convenient, but should it be a priority and will it be cost-effective?"

"And, of course, the other question is where are all the GPs to run it. It is

“Things won't be solved by opening GP surgery at a ridiculous cost for what will be a minority. It will be convenient, but will it be cost-effective?”

Nick Keyte, managing partner at Sydenham House Surgery, Ashford

almost impossible to recruit a GP these days. They are just not coming through like they did years ago."

Dr Julian Spinks, who runs a practice in Darnley Road, Strood, and is chairman of the Kent Local Medical Committee said the money announced to pay for this was simply not enough.

He said: "Everyone wants more access for patients. The real problem is how to make it work. We have real problems right now because there are not enough GPs to go round."

"So how we stretch it so we cover seven days a week is difficult to see."

When it was pointed out that doctors would have to work longer, he said: "A typical full-time GP is already working up to 60 hours a week."

He also pointed out that in all probability there would not be more appointments made but rather they would be moved around those made during the week.

Dr Spinks also questioned the cash being put aside, saying: "That is only a fraction of what you are going to need if you had every practice offering longer opening hours."

"So practices will group together so there will be a practice open in your area, but it won't necessarily be your practice, which in turn creates a problem with the promise that every patient gets to see their own GP."

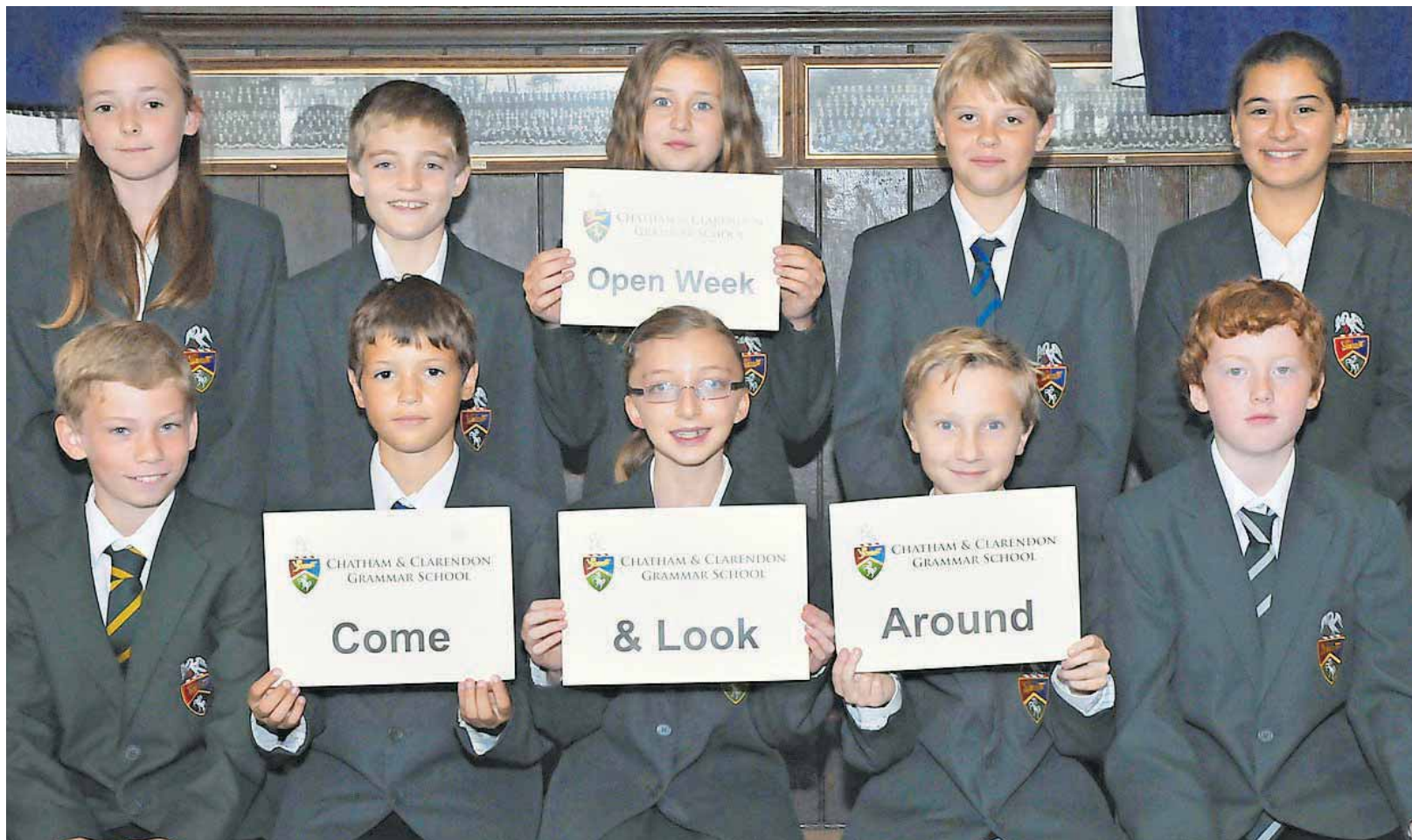
"It cannot work because you can't have GPs working seven days a week without a break."

The Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in Kent, which together represent GPs across the county did not wish to comment on the proposals, nor did NHS England, which commissions GP services.

But Dr Chaand Nagpaul, the chairman of the BMA's GP committee, said: "GPs naturally wish to improve access to patients. But this announcement does not address the current reality of what patients and GPs are facing; we need immediate solutions to the extreme pressures that GP practices are facing, with inadequate numbers of GPs and practice staff to manage increasing volumes of patients."

"The BMA has already set out a range of solutions to address the immediate access needs of patients."

"We urge the Government to prioritise caring for the needs of those patients today, rather than promises for tomorrow."



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Police admit it failed to probe drug death in out-of-court deal with father

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

AGRIEVING father has secured damages from Essex Police after it failed to properly investigate the circumstances surrounding his son's drug-related death.

Graham Philpott, 63, from Gravesend used the Human Rights Act to bring the case following the death of his son, Trevor, on Boxing Day, 2010 at his home in Basildon.

He insists officers failed to investigate the circumstances around his son's death properly, leaving his heart-broken family unable to explain how and why he came to take one of the

drugs which killed him.

And this week Essex Police admitted it had not followed its own procedures and mounted a thorough investigation.

Mr Philpott was this week awarded £4,000 in an out-of-court settlement which his lawyer, Simon McKay, hailed as a victory.

He also hailed it as a legal breakthrough, by using the Human Rights Act to circumnavigate the fact police cannot be sued for negligence in the investigation of crimes.

Mr McKay told KoS: "The police have their own policy for investigating drug deaths and they largely ignored it.

"This case is not merely showing an example of human rights laws being used in the way they were intended, but also of a family secur-



FATHER'S FIGHT: Trevor Philpott, 37, died from a drug-related incident on Boxing Day in 2010

ing some recognition that they were let down by the police in a profound and wholly unacceptable way."

In his court papers, he stated: "Investigative opportunities were missed, namely, the scene was not preserved or searched and a thorough investigation did not take place."

Trevor, originally from Northfleet, had consumed a series of drugs, including the controlled substance Subutex, which is prescribed to recovering heroin-users.

His family insist they had no idea he had ever used drugs and have since discovered he did so occasionally with friends.

The drama occurred in the early hours of Boxing Day when Trevor Philpott stopped breathing and an ambulance called.

By 4.52am it was decided "there are no suspicious circumstances surrounding the incident" and that death was alcohol- and drug-related.

A post-mortem examination on January 5, 2011, found death was caused by a combination of buprenorphine, cocaine and heart disease. The buprenorphine was in a drug with the trade name Subutex.

Court papers said that on January 12 a man reportedly admitted to a coroner's office official that he had supplied Subutex to Trevor a few hours before his death.

He was arrested twice and interviewed, but by this time the Crown Prosecution Service concluded there was insufficient evidence to secure any conviction, including potential offences of involuntary manslaughter and supplying a

controlled substance. The matter was dropped.

An inquest recorded an open verdict in May 2011, and Essex Police has since accepted that more should have been done on the night Mr Philpott died.

Because of these blunders, Mr Philpott says he will never know how his son came to be taking drugs in the first place.

He said: "It took a lot of courage and effort to get where we are now. I complained to the police and then to the Independent Police Complaints Commission and finally took the case to court."

"Essex Police missed opportunities to investigate my son's death right from the first minute they were involved.

"We were completely let down by the officers who attended, right up to the senior ranks. It has caused the entire family distress and heartache. It is still painful to talk about it.

"We were not treated with sympathy – the police just thought of us as a number and not a grieving family.

"Using the human rights laws like this means the police can finally be held to account for their actions or, in this case, lack of them. So many chances to get justice for my son were missed.

"Searches should have been done and drug records checked to see where this Subutex pill came from."

A spokesman for the Essex force said: "Essex Police has reached an out-of-court settlement with the claimant and £4,000 in damages in relation to the investigation surrounding the death of the man's son."

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Team to set off on daring mission to find stolen Nazi treasure

Hidden bunkers, stolen works of art and a secret map; it sounds more like fiction than fact. But a group of ex servicemen are off on an expedition to Germany to try and retrieve valuable artefacts taken by the Nazis during the Second World War. **Maria Chiorando** reports

IT sounds like something out of a Hollywood film: a dying man tells one of his closest friends about the location of hidden Nazi treasure... and gives him a map to help him find it.

But it's an extraordinary true story for Philip Greig, who next spring will be part of a group of ex-Army and special services men embarking on a mission to Germany in a bid to unearth jewellery and works of art stolen during wartime.

Loaded with metal detectors, shovels, tents and, most importantly, the marked map, the group, some of whom have to keep their identities secret because they are ex special services, plan to spend about four months searching for the treasure.

What's more, it is offering people the chance to share in their spoils through an innovative campaign to fund the mission.

Their journey began with a tragedy earlier this year.

Mr Greig, 48, said: "A very good friend of mine asked me to go and talk to him in person - he had something to tell me: he was terminally ill.

"He was older than me - we had met when we were in the military and became close friends.

"I spent a lot of time with him while he was unwell and it was during that time he mentioned the map."

The map was a relic left over from the Second World War, kept secret for many years. It apparently shows the location of hidden riches.

As the truth slowly came to light, Mr Greig, from Beckenham, was entrusted with a mission.

He said: "I found out that my friend's father had been an SS soldier during the war, but my friend had never told anyone because he was ashamed of the violent and disgust-

ing things his father had done.

"Some time around 1943 or 1944, he had been involved in overseeing the construction of a secret bunker in the Bavarian Alps, built by prisoners from the Dachau concentration camp.

"It turns out an enormous amount of the jewellery and artwork stolen from the Jewish people was hidden there, too, so the Allied troops would not find it.

"Once the bunker had been built, the Germans killed all the prisoners.

"His father made a map of the bunker's location, which he kept a secret for many years, until just before he died. He passed the map on to his son, who was unsure what to do with it without exposing his father's identity, which is why he waited until he was dying to tell me about it.

"He asked me to go to Germany, recover the treasure and hopefully return some of it to its rightful owners."

The map covers an area of around half a mile, an area that will have to be systematically excavated.

It won't be easy - the men know nothing about the area.

"You can't just go and start digging," said Mr Greig.

"We need to get permission from the German authorities.

"Two of the group are German soldiers as the rest of us don't speak enough of the language and we need them to help us with the planning.

"We are also starting to think about what equipment we will need. As it stands, we are planning to take two or three Land Rovers and a four-tonne lorry.

"Along with the metal detec-



EVIL: Adolf Hitler's Nazi troops looted and plundered thousands of works of art - many of which were hidden and never recovered

tors, shovels and generators, one of the guys is an ex-Royal Engineer, so he may bring explosives - we're not sure of the law around that yet, but we'll find out as explosives will be quicker than digging everything by hand.

"The expedition is getting more and more expensive - although we are saving, we are also crowd-funding on Indie Go Go and we're going to give a percentage of anything we find to everyone who contributes."

Anything the men find has to be reported to the German authorities, but they will get to keep a share.

While it is believed other people have found treasure before and kept it, Mr Greig is adamant his group will do the right thing.

Once in Germany, the men will be roughing it, sleeping in tents and cooking with basic equipment.

"One of the guys did catering in the Army, so he'll be in charge of cooking," said Mr Greig.

"In many ways, it will be like being

The spoils of war taken to the grave

THE Nazi treasure includes a range of items of value, including jewellery, artwork, gold and ceramics, most of it plundered between 1933 and 1945, from across Europe.

Substantial amounts of jewellery were also stolen from prisoners in concentration camps and death camps along with such items as watches and even gold teeth.

When the Nazis realised they were losing the war, they hid their bounty so the Allied forces would not find it.

Much remains hidden today, with some buried in bunkers, some thought to be sunk in lakes and yet more rumoured to have been smuggled out of the country by high-ranking Nazi officials.

These men were the only ones who knew the location of the hidden loot and, as they died, the secrets went with them.

Recent finds have been staggering: a collection of some 1,500 paintings was found hidden behind cans of food in a Munich flat in November last year. It was valued at about £850 million.

The total value of the stolen goods is unknown, but it is estimated some 16,000 works of art were taken.

out in the field, so I'm looking forward to that. I miss being in the Army and would go back if I wasn't too old.

"I think being out there means we will forge some very close bonds and create even stronger relationships.

"I am nervous about the trip - we have no idea what to expect and we don't know what we will find.

"It is a huge responsibility, to carry out this man's dying wish.

"Whatever happens, it will be incredibly emotional. We are there to carry out the dying wish of a friend and, whether we find the treasure or not, we will be honouring that wish."

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To bomb or not to bomb? How to tackle Islamic State divides MPs

THE savagery, inhumanity and inexplicability of their violence has been medieval and terrifying... and now we are at war with them.

Last Friday, UK MPs voted to join the air strikes against Islamic State (Isis) extremists in Iraq.

For many, the decision was unwelcome and worrying. The West has arguably not covered itself in glory in its most recent interventions in the Middle East, with conflict often worsening rather than being resolved.

But Parliament backed new military action by an overwhelming 524 votes to 43, with the three major parties all supporting it.

Those who voted for it say this war is unquestionably necessary.

The UK is not acting alone, joining a coalition of countries already on the attack, led by the US and including five Arab states, France, Australia and the Netherlands.

Moreover, their help to combat the enemy within has been specifically requested by the Iraqi prime minister.

"Isis present a very apparent danger, not just to the people of Iraq but to everyone around the world," Ashford MP and former justice minister Damian Green told Kent on Sunday.

"They are unspeakably barbaric and evil. Britain should play its part in stopping them as soon as possible; not only because of what they are doing but to protect our own safety as there is no doubt they will come for us as well.

"The bombing is just about stopping them expanding the territory they control. It is not the long-term solution – they will need to be taken on in Iraq by a new Iraqi army.

"It is always difficult to avoid civilian casualties and you have to use technology as much as possible to make sure you are hitting targets and avoiding civilians."

But with the threat level to the UK from international terrorism now classed as 'severe', aren't we putting ourselves at risk of reprisals?

"The things they are already doing to the hostages are nothing to do with anything other Western countries do to them," Mr Green said.

"They are so extreme that they are not attractive to most people who are Islamic. They have gone beyond provoking – they have declared a war on civilisation.

"Isis would have taken over the whole of Iraq if we had bowed out and a potentially democratic country with tens of millions of people would have been in the hands of very, very bad people. There are times when not intervening can make things worse."

Canterbury MP Julian Brazier, who is the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Defence, agreed with Mr Green.

"The issue was do we, faced with this ghastly threat which is sucking British youngsters in and destabilising a whole region, sit back and let others do it on their own?" he said.

"We are helping on several different levels, including the intelligence

A week after Parliament voted overwhelmingly for the UK to join air strikes in Iraq, **Sarah Linney** spoke to politicians from Kent who voted for and against the bombing raids



YES OR NO: HOW OUR MPs VOTED ON ISIS BOMBING...



DECISION-MAKERS: From top clockwise, Gordon Henderson, Damian Green, Julian Brazier, Mark Reckless and Adam Holloway



side, and we are the second biggest donors of aid to the region.

"It's easy to talk about meddling, and the intervention by Tony Blair in Iraq was a disaster, but the fact he got it wrong then doesn't mean we are permanently disempowered.

"The majority of conflicts we have got involved in over the years we have won. We took part in the Bosnian operation, which was one of the most successful – we went into a horrendous crisis and brought peace to the area. We managed to achieve an election in Afghanistan against all the naysayers, and for the first time in that country's history the peaceful transfer of power to an elected president."

Just six Tory MPs voted against the war – three of whom were from Kent.

Sittingbourne and Sheppey MP Gordon Henderson used a Facebook poll to get his constituents' views and, with an even split between those in favour of the war and those against it, made his mind up during the seven-hour debate.

"Bombing is a blunt instrument. It is indiscriminate," he said.

"I am concerned that innocent people would be killed. It is not entirely clear how we determine who we are going to be bombing.

"Isis is a disparate group of un-uniformed rebels who, because of their very nature, will be mingling

with the local population.

"If I genuinely thought that by bombing Isis we were going to be able to bring to an end that awful regime, I would have voted to do it.

"But having listened to the debate, it became clear to me that Britain joining the bombing raids would not significantly increase the chances of defeating Isis.

"In my view it was a gesture of solidarity with other countries rather than an effective solution to the problem – I would like to see a United Nations' ground force in the area instead."

And he said the West's involvement could add fuel to Isis' cause.

"We are in danger of being sucked

into a wider conflict," Mr Henderson said. "The more involvement there is from Western nations, the more Isis will say look how they are trying to dictate to us.

"There is no doubt in my mind that they will probably manipulate things to ensure civilian casualties, and they will broadcast those across the airwaves and other radical Islamists will be drawn in."

Gravesend MP Adam Holloway, a former soldier who fought in the Gulf War, also voted against the strikes.

"We should help, but the idea that this is a military problem, to be solved by an American-led coalition, doesn't work," he said.

"We couldn't have a worse headline than American-led air strikes in the Middle East.

"What has a chance of working is for it to be seen as a political problem. Isis have taken huge swathes of territory because the local people wanted them to. The locals have welcomed them as they are fed up with their government.

"We can help with funds, with diplomacy and communication, but I don't think our getting involved in such an up-front way is helpful. This has to be sorted out by the people on the ground."

Mark Reckless, then MP for Rochester and Strood, was the third Kent Tory to vote against the war – and had left the party for Ukip 24 hours later.

"The arguments were finely balanced, but I think if you want to drop bombs on people you have to be pretty sure you are doing the right thing and think it's going to make things better. I am not convinced it will," he said.

However, Labour also supported the air strikes, which Medway Labour leader Vince Maple said were necessary.

"British citizens are being killed – aid workers whose very existence was about help and support – and we need to try to stop these barbaric attacks," he said.

"Iraq is saying we need help, which makes it different from Syria.

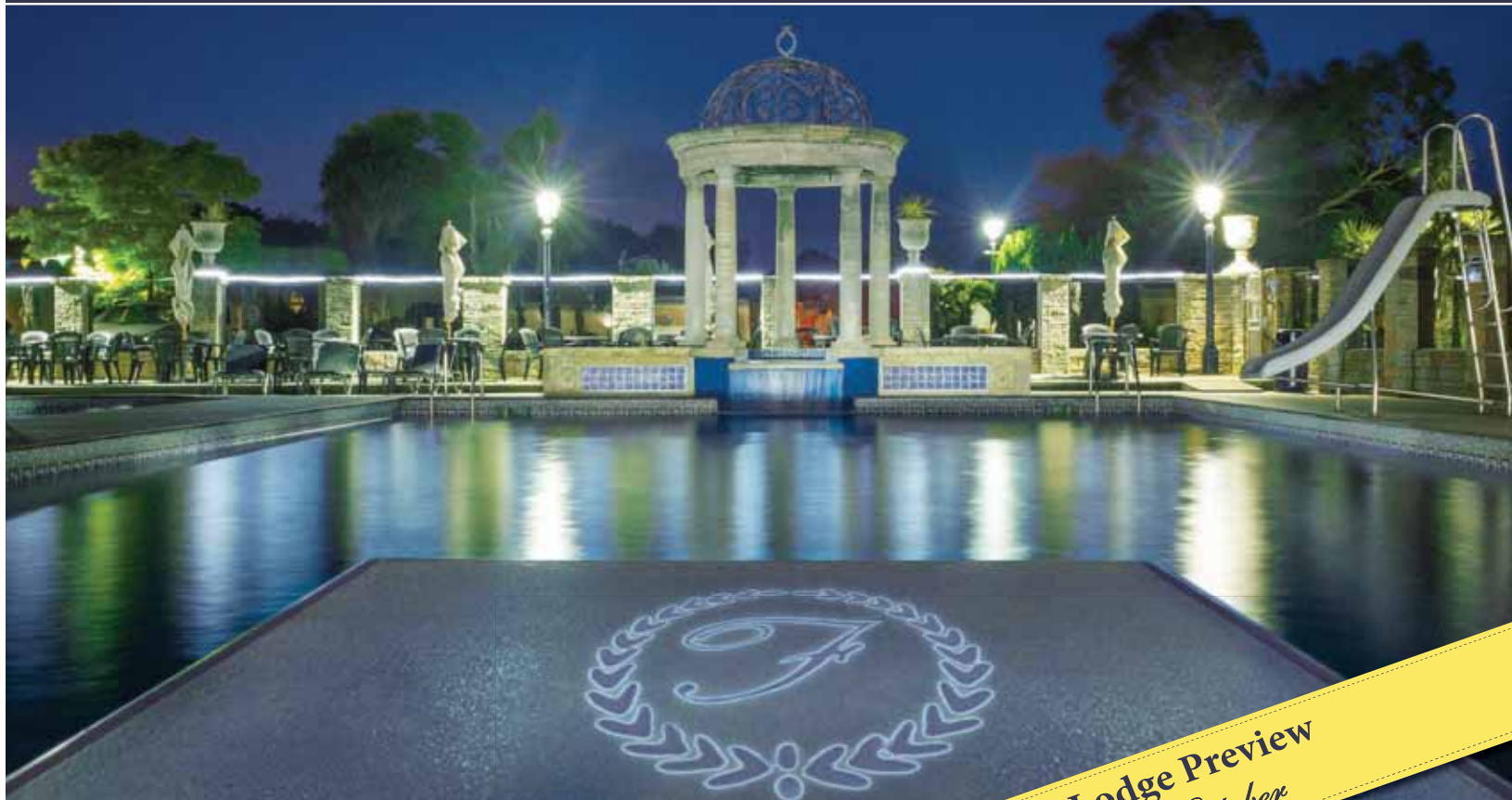
"Whether to go to war is always the most difficult decision for any elected representative and I respect any view on either side. You need to look at each situation on a case-by-case basis – if you were to propose that we will never intervene or we will always intervene, it is not going to work.

"It's got to be about humanitarian and diplomatic intervention too. A peaceful solution has to be part of a wider conversation about peaceful solutions elsewhere in that part of the world."

Mr Brazier agreed. "The war is already happening and we are supporting the good guys. We are just doing our bit, which is what Britain's always been good at," he said.

"The question one has to ask is what would be the price of doing nothing? We would simply be letting this get worse and worse."

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A TIGHT UNIT: Mnozil Brass are taking in the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells, on their 20th-anniversary tour, which has just eight UK dates

The crazy brass band from Austria who cry at Python

The senses will be in for a busy time when Mnozil Brass visit the county with their distinctive mix of music, theatre, dancing and jokes, as **David Mairs** discovers

THOSE crazy, zany Austrians, eh! Not, perhaps, something you thought you would ever read, even if you had encountered Brūno, one of Sacha Baron Cohen's more ridiculous alter egos.

However, the campiest fashion journalist on the planet does not have a monopoly on Austrian wackiness, which is where we turn to Mnozil Brass, a seven-piece band that mix musical ability with what is described as "a totally unique brand of musical theatre".

Their own PR puff articulates the experience thus: "They switch between musical genres, honed visual comedy and vocal dexterity – with a hefty dose of sheer athleticism on trombone, tuba and trumpet thrown in."

They have delighted audiences across the world. Hearts and minds have been won in Australia, China, Japan, Russia, Israel, Canada,

Europe, Taiwan and the US, while in recent years they have produced three operas.

They have come a long way since meeting as students at the University of Music in Vienna, where they would drink in a pub owned by one Herr Josef Mnozil.

From 1993 the group would play there regularly, soon discovering that people wanted to be entertained, not just played to.

"Slapstick and surreal comedy found its way into their presentation and the idiosyncrasies of each player merely added to the overall effect," we are told.

Such is the esteem in which they are held that, for the anniversary of the birth of Richard Wagner, the band have been asked to produce a work for the town of Bayreuth, where the great composer lived until his death.

So, are they as zany a bunch as first impressions might suggest?

"Yes, sometimes," said Mnozil Brass trumpeter Thomas Gansch.

"But we have pretty normal family lives with kids."

So how does the zaniness translate to the stage?

"We perform jokes. We don't use words a lot – it's more mime. There's singing, playing and dancing and at the end we announce the people who have been involved."

Although he doesn't know Tunbridge Wells, where the band will be playing this week, Gansch is looking forward to playing the UK on this 20th-anniversary tour.

"I think there's a strong connection between Austrian and British humour, both of which are very dark," he said. "And of course there is a huge brass-band tradition in this country."

"I grew up with Monty Python. If I had been free, I would have flown to London to see them on their reunion, but I wasn't. It was a shame, a bloody shame."

"I saw some of it on TV and when they sang Always Look On The

Bright Side Of Life I had an urge to cry. I'm very emotional."

And are Mnozil Brass audiences ever moved to tears?

"Maybe by the smell of us leaping about on the stage."

Really? What could possibly cause such a chain reaction?

"Do you really want to know? It depends what we've been eating."

"Although maybe sometimes we do make people cry with laughter, or sometimes with boredom."

Assuming they can see through the tears, whatever their cause, what can fans expect?

"We select pieces from all genres that we like and combine them."

Which, just possibly, means there will be something for everyone.

■ Mnozil Brass are at the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells, on Thursday, October 9, at 7.30pm. Tickets are priced at £25 for adults and £16 for children. Visit www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk or phone 01892 530613.

» Features team

Editor: David Mairs

dave.mairs@archant.co.uk

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17th July 2015	4	21st July 2015	HB	Fri-Tues	£425	£645
10th Aug 2015	6	16th Aug 2015	HB	Mon-Sun	£510	£845
31st Aug 2015	4	4th Sept 2015	HB	Mon-Fri	£425	£685
13th Sept 2015	6	19th Sept 2015	HB	Sun-Sat	£480	£785
23rd Sept 2015	4	27th Sept 2015	HB	Wed-Sat	£425	£650

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Peter Pan cast sprinkle fairy dust on proceedings at launch of this year's Assembly Hall Theatre panto



BBC stars ready for trip to Neverland this Christmas

BELLS Yew Green came alive to the sound of cutlasses and cannons when the cast of Peter Pan got the launch of the Assembly Hall Theatre's pantomime under way.

Panto stars on board for the event were Mark Moraghan (Captain Hook) and Gemma Hunt (Tinker Bell), along with Jessica Punch (Peter Pan) and Mark James (Smee).

The events was held at Team Dynamics International, which is known for its training and conference facilities and situated on a 200-acre site outside Tunbridge Wells.

Moraghan, known to millions for his portrayal of Owen Davis in the BBC1 medical drama *Holby City* and more recently as the narrator of much-loved children's TV show *Thomas The Tank Engine*, has also appeared in series such as *Brookside*, *Heartbeat* and *Celebrity MasterChef*.

This year he will play the dastardly villain Captain Hook in a production once again staged by the world's largest pantomime producer, UK Productions.

Joining him in Neverland will be presenter Gemma Hunt as Tinker Bell. She regularly hosted CBBC's live TV coverage at Wimbledon and

has appeared on *ChuckleVision* and in the CBeebies pantomime.

Peter Pan promises magical family entertainment for the festive season. What would Christmas be without pantomime? Especially one full of pirates, fairies, flying scenes and great music.

Produced by Martin Dodd, from UK Productions, Peter Pan will be appearing at the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells, from Friday, December 12, until Sunday, January 4. Tickets are available from the Assembly Hall Theatre box office on 01892 530613 or online at www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk.



GRIPPING TALE: Casualty star Mark Moraghan and CBeebies presenter Gemma Hunt play Captain Hook and Tinkerbell in this year's Peter Pan show



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Dance company roll back the years as

Pictures: HUGO GLENDENNING/TRISTRAM KENTON



UK national dance company brings its unique take on the art form with return of modern-day classic and piece inspired by Hadron Collider

RAMBERT, Britain's national dance company, returns to Canterbury this month with a line-up that includes Rooster, featuring the iconic music of The Rolling Stones.

Also on the bill at The Marlowe is a new piece inspired by the science of the cosmos.

Christopher Bruce's Rooster pays homage to the Swinging Sixties. Sharp-suited, snake-hipped men and strong, sassy women perform virtuoso courtship dances set to some of the Stones' most famous

tunes, including Not Fade Away, Paint It Black, As Tears Go By, Sympathy For The Devil and Little Red Rooster.

One of the country's leading choreographers, Bruce's work is in demand around the world. He is a former dancer and artistic director with Rambert, who first performed Rooster in 1994.

The piece quickly became established as a modern classic and a firm audience favourite and it is making a return to the UK stage in 2014 after a 13-year absence.

Rambert artistic director Mark



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science and the Stones collide on stage



Baldwin's new work, *The Strange Charm Of Mother Nature*, is the latest in his series of dances inspired by science.

Following earlier works that brought to life the theories of Einstein and Darwin, *The Strange Charm Of Mother Nature* looks at particle physics and the discovery of the Higgs boson 'God Particle'.

Inspired by a visit to the Large Hadron Collider, the world's largest and most powerful particle collider, in Switzerland, this work sees the dancers fizz with the energy of the microscopic particles that created

life and the universe.

The musical accompaniment includes Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No 3*, Stravinsky's *Dumbarton Oaks* and a new piece composed by Cheryl Frances-Hoad, all played live by the Rambert Orchestra.

Also featured in the programme is Richard Alston's short, sharp solo, *Dutiful Ducks*, choreographed to the tongue-twisting word poem of the same name by Charles Amirkhanian.

It is paired with Merce Cunningham's *Sounddance*,

featuring David Tudor's electronic score, improvised live each night.

Rambert are at The Marlowe Theatre at 7.30pm from Wednesday Friday, October 8-10.

Tickets, priced from £9.50 to £27.50 (concessions available; booking fee applies), are from the box office on 01227 787787 or at marlowetheatre.com.

There will be a sign language-interpreted performance on Wednesday, September 8. The free pre-show talk with Mark Baldwin (6.30pm, booking required) is also being signed.

GETTING SATISFACTION: Rambert will be performing their classic piece *Rooster*, the Rolling Stones-inspired work that was first seen in 1994

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23rd October	Ben Jordan (From USA) 8pm FREE ENTRY
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James happy for stage premiere to lift the lid on a story of deceit

LOVERS of crime-thrillers rejoice! After the hit premiere stage production of Peter James's *The Perfect Murder* at The Orchard Theatre in Dartford earlier this year, the best-selling work of this gifted novelist returns in the winter.

This time the adaptation of his most famous and popular book to date, *Dead Simple*, will be premiered.

James took part in a suitably claustrophobic photo opportunity at a London funeral directors when, like

the protagonist Michael Harrison, he found himself inside a coffin.

When asked how he felt about *Dead Simple* being premiered at The Orchard Theatre, he said: "I'm hugely looking forward to coming."

"*Dead Simple*, which is quite a change of atmosphere to *The Perfect Murder*, is a play that's going to work extremely well in The Orchard."

"*The Perfect Murder* is very much a black comedy, whereas this is quite a dark thriller and I think it's going to have some very scary moments in

it and I think The Orchard Theatre is just a beautiful venue for it."

Michael Harrison has it all: great career, great friends and a beautiful fiancée. But when his stag-night prank goes horribly wrong, Michael finds himself alone, buried alive and facing a terrifying fate.

As time runs out and the terror grows, Detective Superintendent Roy Grace tries to solve Michael's mysterious disappearance. But as he begins to unravel a tangled web of deceit and treachery, Grace fears

Michael will never be found in time.

Directed by Olivier Award-winner Ian Talbot and adapted by award-winning writer Shaun McKenna, this thriller has all the classic twists and turns of a Peter James novel.

James has sold more than 14 million books of his Roy Grace series and is published in 36 languages.

■ *Dead Simple* will be at The Orchard Theatre from Wednesday to Saturday, January 14-17, 2015. For more details, visit orchardtheatre.co.uk or phone 01322 220000.



OPENING UP: Author Peter James' *Dead Simple* comes to The Orchard

Emotions flying high as French troupe promises to have Off day



FRENCH acrobats will fly through the air with the greatest of ease for your enjoyment at Quarterhouse in Folkestone next month.

Starring a fantastic cast of highly accomplished circus performers, Off journeys from the surreal to the surprising to give an extraordinary night out at the theatre.

This new show from gifted French ensemble Cie Kiai explores the mysteries of the mind and communicates a spectrum of emotions using the physical skills of

a contortionist, a hip-hop dancer, a hand-stander, an acrobat and a clown.

A feast for the eyes, Off is accompanied by hypnotic electro-music driven by original pulsing baselines and rhythmic beats.

Darkly comic, mischievous and with a very big trampoline, this opportunity to catch the UK premiere from Cie Kiai is truly a one Off!

The talented acrobats have been exciting and delighting audiences since 1994 and have developed a

style that has wowed audiences around the world.

If you joined Quarterhouse for the incredible K'boum last autumn then you will know how awe-inspiring these acrobats can be. Off is similar but even more hair-raising.

Off will be at Quarterhouse, Folkestone, on Saturday, October 18, at 7pm. Tickets are priced at £6 for adults, £5 for children and £20 for a family ticket (two adults and two children). Phone 01303 760750 or visit www.quarterhouse.co.uk.

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Accordingly, it is wise to prepare well in advance for the cold weather and testing conditions that invariably lie ahead.

Not only are things often more likely to go wrong in winter but there really is no worse time for things to

go wrong! Imagine, for example, your car packing up when you are driving along the motorway in the wind and the rain.

It hardly bears thinking about, so go and get a winter service. As ever, it's better to be safe than sorry.

And it's not just on the road that you need to be careful.

It's also vital that your home is ready for the rigours of winter.

Roofs are in the firing line when the heavens open, so be sure yours is checked and set for the onslaught.

Plummeting temperatures will put pressure on your home's pipes, so why not get a plumber to give them the once-over and allow you to sleep easy at night without the fear that you could be waking up to a flood!

If the worst comes to the worst and water does get into your house during inclement weather, you could be looking at a disaster if it finds its way to your electrics.

So, again, get them checked!

It's your home, your car, your life. Don't get caught out by winter!

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KENT LIFE

Gino's success nothing to write home about

He was crowned king of the jungle and is Britain's favourite Italian chef but Gino D'Acampo is still to impress his own mother, as **Andy Welch** discovered

WHENEVER Gino D'Acampo plates up impressive-looking meals on TV, he can rest assured that along with the usual chorus of 'Oohs' and 'Aahs' in the studio, somewhere in southern Italy, at least one person will be bewildered by the fanfare.

"Every time my mother sees me on television, she says to me 'I cannot understand how you make a plate of pasta and end up with a job on television! Italian people make plates of pasta every day and nobody notices."

"You make a plate of pasta and end with a job on television," explains the lively 38-year-old cook, who won I'm A Celebrity... Get Me Out Of Here! in 2009.

According to D'Acampo, his mama "always has something to say" about his food.

So presumably when he sends over a batch of DVDs of his latest

“The north side of Italy is completely different to the south and the food and people are very different”

series, Gino's Italian Escapes: A Taste Of The Sun, his dear old mum will have plenty of feedback.

"Often I say to her 'Don't tell me too straight - lie to me!'," the chef confides, laughing.

At least he had a great time making the programme, spending an idyllic month exploring his home country once again.

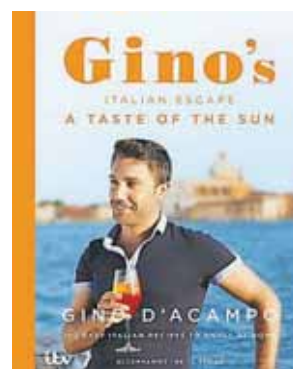
While the previous series focused on southern Italy, the second helping, which is accompanied by a book of the same name, sees D'Acampo travelling around the north of the country, sampling regional specialities.

"The north side of Italy is completely different to the south and the food is very different," says the Naples-born foodie, who says his dream travelling companion is his wife Jessica, with whom he has two sons and a daughter.

"The people are different, the ingredients are different. I did enjoy this time, because it was like 25 days travelling the most beautiful places in the world.

"I mean, how lucky am I?"

He came home with happy food memories of "absolutely wonderful



DISH: Gino D'Acampo has just finished filming the second series of Gino's Italian Escapes: A Taste Of The Sun

little cherry tomatoes", fennel, and a very tasty ham from Bologna.

The Italian adventure was also a welcome chance to escape a certain sugary treat, which he is often sent when he works on ITV's Let's Do Lunch With Gino And Mel.

"Cupcakes," he vents, "are a waste of time. The stodge at the bottom, with a whole load of sugar on the top. They're big and people

make so much effort, and you think 'Really? You spent two hours doing this?'."

"You know what? If I want a heart attack, I got better ways to do it," he adds with a wry laugh.

He does, however, make an exception for his wife's Nutella and hazelnut cupcakes and knows he has to be polite when he's given baked gifts.

"You always have to do the thing, 'Oh lovely!' and 'Thank you very much!'," he says, laughing.

"And then, as soon as they've gone, I give them away!" ■ **Gino's Italian Escape: A Taste Of The Sun** by Gino D'Acampo, is published in hardback by Hodder, priced £20, available now. The series of the same name is on ITV on Fridays.

When quantity meets quality, paradise is near

Toby Carvery

Location: Ramsgate

By David Mairs

On my time at Kent on Sunday, I have been fortunate enough to have reviewed many of this county's finest restaurants. There have been a couple of shockers, for sure, but for the most part the experience has been highly pleasurable. Perhaps the most striking aspect over the past decade has been an unquestionable rise in standards – we know more about our food now and we expect something special when we go out to dine. I would suggest that if there has been a downside to the development of Kent's culinary kingdom, it is that prices have grown every bit as fast, often without due reason. Too often restaurants think they can get away

with charging too much. And too often they do. This is never an accusation that could be hurled at Toby Carvery in Ramsgate. A final bill of £32.74 for three people who all had a drink and dessert as well as a main course is an astonishing achievement, whichever way you cut it. The address says Ramsgate, but Toby Carvery sits in the tatty No Man's Land between that town and its neighbours of Margate and Broadstairs. It's a place of shopping malls, new roads and half-completed housing estates. There are a few fields left, but you get the feeling they won't be



around for long. In short, the setting is far from idyllic. The restaurant itself is relatively modern and, while not a disaster of design, has all the look of a mock Tudor. I suppose it fits the area. Whatever its architectural merits, however, Toby Carvery really is rather special. It is a place that will always divide opinion. Snobs will declare it far too cheap and mass-produced, while those eager throngs who queue to get a table clearly view things very differently.

I am in the latter camp. I love the place. While wholly appreciative of more sophisticated venues, I'm also open to the wonderment of this place. True, you can fear for the state of humanity as you watch some of your fellow diners pile up their extra-large plates (really, you can get one for a few bob extra!) with more food than is decent, but the trick is to suspend reality and drift into a dreamy place of roast meats (you have a choice of three), roast potatoes, vegetables, Yorkshire puddings, crackling,

stuffing, rich gravy... all cooked sublimely. What, of course, takes Toby to another level is the fact that, apart from the meat, you can have as much of everything as you want. It would be wise not to eat here every day, but return I will... often.

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KENT ME6

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Details correct at time of press. Computer generated images depict streetscenes and typical interior at The Herons and are indicative only.



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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

Underlying issues need addressing

IF Manston Airport does become a vast housing estate, has anyone thought about the effect this will have on our overstretched roads?

The local roads are already gridlocked at weekends and in the rush hours, so what plans have been made not to add to this current unacceptable situation?

A few other points: I thought the runway at Manston was protected, especially as it continues to be used for emergency landings; what effect will a housing estate have on the local aquifers providing our drinking water and when Southern Water seem incapable of dealing with the storm rains we already have?

Are they confident in dealing with the water drainage issues and sewage that will be produced by thousands of houses at Manston?

Laura Sandys and Sir Roger Gale might like to raise these points, when discussing Manston's future.

Paddy Earp, Broadstairs

Underestimating Manston's value

I'M old enough to remember the Great War Birds air displays at West Malling aerodrome.

People campaigned to keep that as a business airport, but Kent County Council turned it into a golf course.

Of course, they will say Kings Hill is a successful business park, with executive houses and postage stamp gardens, with it's Guy Gibson Court and The Spitfire pub as a perfunctory nod to it's history (same as Hawking).

Manston is different, however.

Thanet council can not be expected to instigate a Compulsory Purchase Order as they will have to foot the bill while it has no viable backer. They are not sophisticated enough in any case.

The Government need to take control, as Manston is vital in easing pressure on the UK's aviation.

Heathrow is already the only airport in the world where BA pilots are constantly in holding patterns trying to land. This needs to be done in conjunction with an extra Thames river crossing.

If anything happened to the QE2 bridge, south east England would become a car park.

The basic problem in Britain it seems is the short-sightedness of government; halfway through the leadership they just concentrate on the next General Election.

Mike Thompson,
 editor Petham & Waltham News

LETTER OF THE WEEK



County been ready to go it alone for years

THE Tories at County Hall have, to their credit, grasped what Westminster politicians have not (The Devolution debate, KoS, last week).

Devolution has to be on an equal basis to regions throughout the United Kingdom.

Promises to Scotland have already determined what is to be devolved, however disgraceful the undemocratic process involved.

Therefore, the most urgent decisions now required are to determine the regions of England which will receive power.

The gerrymandered south east region, from Dover to Hampshire and Oxfordshire, was imposed on us undemocratically. It is far too large and has no coherent geographical structure.

Kent has been separately identifiable since the end of Roman times. We have had a distinctive culture and geographical arrangements for many centuries. We also

have a potentially well-balanced economy. In short, Kent forms a natural unit within a highly devolved nation.

In ancient times, the governance of Kent always included identified representation for east Kent and west of the county.

As a devolved Kent would inevitably involve Medway, we would need from the start to ensure our governance respects the needs and wishes of every part.

One important final point. Whilst central UK government might need to redistribute wealth in the interests of reducing inequality, institutionalised preference for any one region in perpetuity is unacceptable.

It may be in contravention of international law. As a result, financial promises made to Scotland before the recent referendum are unacceptable and cannot be kept.

Frederic Stansfield, Canterbury

It's time we pulled the welcome mat

ANDREW South is living in the same fantasy world as the 'great pretenders' in Westminster [KoS 21.09].

Asylum seekers are supposed to travel to the nearest available country, not trek round the world to overcrowded, soft touch Britain.

With a £1.3 trillion national debt, we can ill-afford more 'cheap' labour earning under the agreed minimum

wage and needing financial assistance, while paying for two million of our own people to sit on the dole.

Our government has a debt of duty to the people living in this country and while services collapse under the weight of numbers and the indigenous population, who are paying all the bills, struggle to get housing, doctors appointments, hospital appointments, children into schools, it is the economics of the madhouse to bring thousands more into this country.

Phil Granger, West Malling

Iraqi troubles were there for all to see

UNFORTUNATELY, the message of academic experts both British and Iraqi of 'give diplomacy a chance' are yet again completely drowned by the noise of fighter jets and bombs.

We have a rerun of the 2003 war situation of bomb first and determine a strategy later.

It was ex-PM Tony Blair and best war salesmen of the year 2003, who candidly told us "there will be many wars not just one".

Yet again the UK joins US military action, hoping and assuming there is a sensible plan and an end game.

Has anyone offered us convincing analysis of why Iraqi society, for many decades largely secular, is today infiltrated and wrecked by religious zealots and fanaticism?

Why is it now being ruled by one of the worst governments in the world? Why has Britain rushed to aid a newly formed government that comes from the same self-serving, corrupt and corruptible political class as that of Nuri Al-Maliki's?

I put it to you the UK government has played its own role in ignoring the fuelling of terrorism and extremism in Iraq, by not rising to its legal and moral responsibilities towards the persistent and appalling human rights violations taking place systematically and with complete impunity since 2005.

Abuses that include shooting peaceful protesters, arbitrary arrests, kidnapping of women in lieu of their men folk, rape and torture, prolonged unlawful detention, unfair trials and extortion by government security forces. Most of these violations were/are documented in reports by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

Moreover, schools, hospitals and universities are not protected from Maliki's bombs.

And now Maliki is given the role of a deputy president of Iraq in order to avoid facing any legal accountability and consequences for his actions.

Let us not beat around the bush. The UK's participation in a US plan is yet again Britain hanging on to the shirt tail of American foreign policy and hoping for the best.

How was it that a minority of 'crazed foreign fighters' can suddenly operate sophisticated weaponry conveniently left for them by the government's army?

Anyone who believes this latest military intervention has anything to do with humanitarianism is very much mistaken. They are just a convenient excuse.

Tahrir Abdulsamad, Orpington

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles which tie in with our parent company Archant's overall mission statement.

Archant's mission statement is: "We bring together motivated buyers and sellers through the creation of unique and compelling content and community expertise." This is summed up in the strapline "Inspiring Communities".

The way KoS will create our unique and compelling content is to follow these 10 principles: **Kent on Sunday will:**

- 1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
- 2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
- 3) Be written in clear, concise English.
- 4) Not be overly sensational.
- 5) Have a sense of humour.
- 6) Have an easily understood division between

news, comment and advertising.

- 7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
- 8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
- 9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
- 10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.



Gravesend Reach

by **Geof Foxwell,**
from **Gravesend**

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20th October 2014
Tuesday
21st October 2014
at 9.15am

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Women Seeking

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MAUREEN, discreet sensual lady, 42yrs seeks daytime fun at her home, ACA, Tel No: 0905 002 1961 Box No: 405297

KAREN 35 petite dark hair/eyed affectionate, caring, lovely female with many interests looking for genuine tlc from loving soul mate, dark haired preferred. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414487

ANNA, busty mature lady seeks no strings discreet meetings with male any age or location. Tel No: 0905 002 1956 Box No: 366019

JULIE good looking 40's female, medium build, size 12, loveable, considerate, OHAC, likes nights in/out, walking, seeking loving male without lots of baggage. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414387

CHRISTINA, curvy beauty, 27yrs, own home, very very adventurous seeks no strings fun and frolics. Can accommodate and will answer all calls. Tel No: 0905 002 1957 Box No: 410127

HELEN 19yr old bubbly female looking for male to take me out and show me a good time. No pressure just fun times, no time wasters. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414223

GILLY, voluptuous well groomed lady, seeks man to massage and pamper. Married exciting men please apply. Tel No: 0905 002 1933 Box No: 412933

FREE single 25yr old busty curvy black beauty, sensual, confident, interesting, looking for handsome man to call me back. Race/age unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414219

SALLY, 36yrs discreet broad-minded lady seeks absolutely no strings adult fun, any age/area. Aca. Tel No: 0905 002 1945 Box No: 410575

BLUE eyed slim pretty easy going hardworking lady seeking male to put the spark back into my life, must be honest, affectionate, have a GSOH and want to work at a relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414217

RACHAEL, 36yrs, looking good for my age but need some daytime excitement. All text's answered. Box 4507091 Text Only

PROMOTIONAL ADVERT OF THE WEEK



FELICITY, I'm quite posh and spoilt, 23yrs, Just left uni and looking for some adventures with an older gent. Box No: 4507090 Text only

MO 36yr old slim blue eyed pretty blonde looking for fun times with non-judgemental, discreet, kind male. Age/status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414215

DIANNA, down to earth single mum. Kids at school and bored all day. Come round and see me, or text and chat. Discreet assured. Box 4507092 Text Only

JANE 29yr, loves riding and spending time horsing around, normal non-serious kind of normal guy who enjoys going out having a good time. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414205

KAREN young looking attractive vibrant slim blonde, enjoys to keep fit, beach walks, travel, meals in/out, good conversation with pleasant company, WLTm genuine sincere male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414203

SANDRA attractive lady seeking someone special to help regain my trust in the male species. Only genuine guys pls. I will be worth your time, you won't be disappointed. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414195

FEMALE 38, attractive, African, single mum, seeks male, 35-50 for nights out, socialising, friendship and fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412793

TRACY 35yr busty bubbly out there sized 18 lady looking for a caring loving guy who appreciates womanly curves, over indulgences and having fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414189

MARY tall blonde size 12 lady, nice personality, good conversationalist, varied and open to interests, loves weekends away/holidays, seeking similar male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414179

SLIM tall, elegant, feminine, N/S, solvent lady, young 50's, likes, red wine, seeks tall, sincere, military, retired, professional gentleman of high calibre. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414251

WIDOW late 60's, likes most things, seeking a lonely gent, 70-75 to make me love and laugh again. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414093

FEMALE seeking male for adult fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413809

68YR old widow, seeking company of a male, 68-75 for friendship, likes cinema, theatre, nights in, meals out, seaside walks. Wants someone to help me love again. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413689

BBW 51, caring, solvent, seeks male of similar age for fun times and socialising. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413621

PETITE slim blonde 39yrs, pretty big blue eyes, looking for similar easygoing older male to put a spark back into my life, enjoy nights in/out and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412327

WIDOW 70, lonely, seeking gent, 70-75 to bring a bit of sparkle back in life, likes theatre, cinema. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412475

KATIE 26yr old pretty slim blue eyed blonde looking for evening entertainment with open-minded discreet guy, any age. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412319

JANE 29yr old horsey female, loves the outdoors, cycling, as well as duvet days, WLTm not too serious male for a hopefully normal relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412315

MARY 5ft 6in size 12 blonde, nice personality, good conversationalist, interesting, lots of interests WLTm liked minded caring, happy male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412169

CLARE 36yrs successful single mum, independent, employed with OHAC, size 10, green eyes, pretty, likes swimming, family life, seeking male with similar values and interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412053

SHARON 32yrs and still soul searching for Mr Right, I enjoy keeping in shape, caring for people, seeking loving respectful guy who also knows a good time. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412049

SLIM petite, attractive brunette, 56, British/Russian origin, excellent cook/home maker, seeks cultured male for serious relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412129

FREYA 33 6ft blonde, loves dancing and have a good time, employed, own home, one son, seeking similar laidback guy/dad for dates, chats and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412045

MARILYN really nice curvy tactile female, loves romantic walks, cosy nights in, quality times, looking for nice male to spend time and fall in love with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411871

JAN 5ft 6ins, dark hair/eyes, nice smile, likes music, travel, countryside, animals, employed, OHAC, looking for companionhip with similar lonely heart. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411865

SARAH 25 petite slim attractive blonde student, enjoys keeping fit, looking good, socialising, going out, being a mum WLTm similar fun genuine guy. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411537

JULIE attractive outgoing female with a very young attitude, loves running, living life, travel, WLTm someone special to make my life complete, hope you're out there. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411513

Men Seeking

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GARETH handsome 40's pilot, strong tall build, seeks daytime discreet passion with lady 30-45. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414421

MID 30's passive guy, who loves to dress up, wants to meet older guys for daytime fun in Tunbridge Wells area. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4517381

SINGLE male, early 50's, seeking female for discreet meets, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414347

MATURE closet cd seeks mature cd for discreet fun. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4509706

39YR old guy, 6ft 2ins, slim-medium build, seeking female for no strings fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414259

LADY companion 60-70 wanted for elderly gent, likes travel with property abroad. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414133

AMABLE intelligent male, 77, light smoker, seeks slim lady for friendship/companionhip. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413127

MATURE male, looking for discreet meetings with female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413039

FRANK 54, 5ft 10ins, blue eyes, blond hair, smooth, seeking friendship with mature female, 40-60. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412893

67YR old male, slim, 5ft 5ins, many interests, likes holidays, meals out, seeking slim female 55-65 with GSOH to share TLC. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414023

BLUE eyed male, fit, toned, likes socialising, travel, OHAC, seeks female, 40-56 for loving, caring relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413981

MALE seeking Asian female, any age, outgoing, likes outdoors for fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413965

KEEN cyclist 58, non-competitive, seeks similar female for sea wall, countryside ride, walking etc for fun, laughs and whatever. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413337

RETIRED engineer 67, likes meals out, nights in, holidays, seeking slim lady, 60-65, young at heart to wine/dine, friendship and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413161

RETIRED male, seeks attractive female for friendship and fun, any age/status/colour. East Kent, can travel. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413133

COMPANY Director, mature, late 50's, seeking female, any age for mutually rewarding friendship. Kent/Surrey area, Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412819

IAN 5ft 11ins, likes rock/roll, singing, making people laugh, seeking someone special. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412799

WRITER tall, slim, dark hair, generous, seeking broadminded lady for fun times. Any age/status. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412749

BARRY divorced, 6ft, well built, seeking fun time girl for good times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412717

MALE seeking friendship of mature woman, smoker. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412703

SINGLE young lady, slim-medium build, 24-38 sought by mature male in Canterbury. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405697

MALE 48, looking for fun loving female to enjoy outdoor activities, nights in and meals out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 392212

JAMES young, free and single, please give me a call if interested. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412345

EX headmaster, tall, dark, seeks adventurous lady, status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412263

MALE 49, 5ft 10ins, likes cinema, reading, walks, seeks female in the Thanet area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412235

BESIDE the Pointe, Literate self-possessing, legginess, kindred spirit sought by white male for elevating the bar. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412223

45YR old male, likes poetry, seeks companion for relationship. Herne Bay area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411993

CHIPS on the pier, walks on the beach/countryside, VGSOH, 58yrs old, fit male, seeks female for laughs and love and whatever. NE Kent. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411725

MALE 5ft 11ins, good-looking, athletic build, looking for discreet fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411477

DEREK seeking female, 50-60 for company, friendship and have fun together. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411433

MALE 49, attractive, fit, spontaneous, good company, no ties, seeking likeminded lady for the road ahead, nights in and out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411309

RAY 63, 5ft 10ins, slim, semi-retired, seeking no strings discreet meets for adult fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411147

WORLD war veteran seeking happy lady with nice conversation in the Kent area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411133

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MALE likes outdoor life, smoker, seeking local female for cosy nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410755

BRIAN 70, Maidstone, seeking female, 60 plus, likes meals out, cinema, theatre, days out and cosy nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410611

DEREK 5ft 11ins, slim-medium build, loving, caring, seeking black lady for possible relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410511

EARLY 50's single male, smoker, seeking likeminded female for company and to share life. Must have GSOH, like animals, walks, home made food and nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410441

41YR old male, dark hair, 5ft 11ins, easy going, likes music, guitar, seeking female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410411

BROWN eyed white mature, handsome male, seeking black female, 18-50 for discreet no strings adult fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410377

PHIL 6ft, clean shaven, blue eyes, smart, likes sports, walks, films, theatre, music, animals, GSOH, seeks female, 40-55 for fun and friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410351

CHRIS widower likes DIY, gardening, nights out, rock and roll, N/S, looking for LTR with female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410191

RETIRED male, fit, active, seeks no strings discreet meet with female, any age and size. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410343

ADVENTUROUS male, mid 50's, seeks similar lady for fun and mutually enjoyable discreet relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410339

ATTRACTIVE white gent, 48, 56ft, romantic, easy going, GSOH, seeking young lady, 60-75 for quality discreet fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410025

DIVORCED male, seeks Oriental lady, likes animals, music, will take care of you forever. Thanet area, willing to travel. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409963

PROFESSIONAL male, early 40's, fun loving, OHAC, seeks warm, sincere female for LTR. Animals/children welcome. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409961

CANTERBURY mature male, medium build, GSOH, varied interests, sign language interpreter, seeks slim-medium build female, 24-42 for LTR. Single mum welcome. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405697

PROFESSIONAL male, early 40's, fun loving, independent, OHAC, seeks warm, sincere, fun loving female for LTR. Animals/children welcome. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409745

TALL black male, 45, likes meals out, good company, romantic, GSOH, light hearted, seeks easy-going female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409621



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By **Iain Dooley**
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

Renault Twingo Dynamique TCe 90

Price: £11,695

Engine: 0.9-litre petrol engine producing 90bhp and 99lb/ft of torque

Transmission: Five-speed manual driving the rear wheels

Performance: Top speed 103mph, 0-62mph in 10.8 sec

Economy: 65.7mpg

Emissions: 99g/km of CO2

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Method in Renault's madness

French car-maker bucks city-car trend with the latest-generation Twingo, moving its engine into the boot in a bid to create more space for passengers

RENAULT'S latest generation Twingo is all back to front: the engine's in the boot and drive goes to the rear wheels. Confused? You shouldn't be, as the French firm's logic is surprisingly sound.

This new Twingo might buck convention in city car circles, but the upshot to everything not being where it should be is a more spacious cabin and improved refinement.

The French firm has a long and largely successful history when it comes to small cars.

From the start the first-generation Twingo nailed it in terms of space, ease of use, affordability and fun to drive attributes. With this more polished approach, Renault hopes this third-gen car can do the business 20-odd years later.

Short but tall is the new black when it comes to city cars these days and the Twingo is no different; it's lofty stance yet compact footprint allow it to squeeze into some seriously tight spaces, yet afford occupants a good amount of cabin space and comfort.

And then there's the name – don't underestimate the power of the Twingo brand.

Historically the cars have benefited from a large take-up in mainland Europe and, predictably, you're tripping over them in France.

There's a reason why the Twingo's engine is in the boot – and it isn't to excite keen drivers.

No, the logic behind the rear engine and rear-wheel drive layout was to liberate more cabin space.



SMALL WONDER: Renault's Twingo bucks the present city-car trends

And it's no gimmick, as Renault's engineers have shaved 10cm off the previous car's length yet have been able to extend this car's wheelbase by 12cm to ensure this five-door car is a genuine four-seater – just.

Furthermore, you can fold the rear seats plus, if you pick the right option, fold the front passenger seat forwards to liberate a whopping

2.3 metres of load space. Try doing that in an average supermini.

With no engine up front, the Twingo's modest fascia is less bulky than normal. This in turn boosts forward visibility. And with no front driveshafts present, the car's turning circle is smaller than anything else in its class.

What the Twingo is not is a tail-happy hooligan, as Renault's

engineers have set the car up to be refined, benign and ease to drive.

The result is a car with a decent ride, slick manual gear change and accurate steering.

Like the car, engine choice is equally compact.

The flagship 0.9-litre turbo-charged three-cylinder petrol motor also powers the Clio, but for the Twingo this 90 horsepower motor has been modified so it fits under the boot floor.

The result is a punchy response and ample power, even for modest motorway trips.

The engine fitted to all bar the top trim is a 70 horsepower non turbo 1.0-litre unit, which delivers an equally refined performance at low speeds but does need to be pedalled harder out of town.

This latest generation Twingo is no hair shirt econo-box, so don't expect Tata Nano rock bottom prices. You're looking at 11-and-a-bit thousand pounds for the high power model, although this does come with enough kit to embarrass a supermini from the class above.

In reality the more popular 70hp cars strike a better balance of affordability and luxury, with all the safety basics covered plus DAB radio and mid range models adding air-con for a shade under 10 grand.

Want a small city car but fancy something a little left field? If so, Renault's Twingo might do the trick. The car's unconventional rear engine layout has more to do with liberating extra cabin space than replicating the antics of Porsche's 911, and it's this logical approach to practicality that should have savvy buyers beating a path to the dealerships.



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The last-generation Nissan X-Trail was a rugged and practical 4x4 that failed to really excite, but the all-new version is a more sophisticated car, writes **Matt Joy**



BIG BROTHER: Nissan completely redesigned the all-new X-Trail, using the same platform and mechanics found on the Qashqai, giving it a longer wheelbase and greater length, allowing space for a seven-seat cabin

Familiarity breeds a much improved X-Trail experience

THE most important SUV in the Nissan range is the Qashqai, but its bigger brother the X-Trail has arrived in an all-new form to serve those looking for something more sizeable.

From the completely redesigned exterior to the new engines and chassis, this latest X-Trail aims to offer a more refined drive and better on-road performance than the more utilitarian approach of the old car.

In fact, the new X-Trail owes a lot to the Qashqai as it uses the same platform and mechanicals.

The key difference however is size, with a longer wheelbase and greater length creating more space and room for seven seats.

It's a game of spot the difference for the X-Trail and the smaller Qashqai. Put them side-by-side and you'll see where they diverge but the familiarity is no bad thing.

The old X-Trail was an undeniably boxy affair but the new one is slick, modern and attractive.

It still looks tough and has the raised ride height, but it's a much classier car that can cut it with posh boys rather than looking like a farm hack.

You don't fully appreciate just how large the X-Trail is until you get inside.

Up front there's generous head and legroom and in the second row the space is impressive – legroom is particularly good and the seats can slide forwards or backwards to suit your needs. The third row folds into place easily and while you wouldn't want to shove an adult in there for long it's ideal for children.

Another important feature on the X-Trail is a new 1.6-litre diesel engine that is likely to be the most popular engine choice.

Despite its relatively small capacity it offers the same torque as the outgoing 2.0-litre diesel

unit but with far superior emissions and economy figures. It doesn't feel underpowered either; it's not fast of course, but quick enough with 0-62mph taking 10.5 seconds.

The X-Trail's transformation is completed by the ride quality and all-round refinement. Where the old car always reminded you of its off-road capability, the new X-Trail is composed over poor surfaces and is easy to drive with accurate steering and slick controls. It's not really a car to be hurled through bends but it is safe and faithful should you choose to do so.

All versions are packed with equipment. The entry-level Visia model comes with air-conditioning,

six airbags, LED daytime running lights and Bluetooth connectivity as standard, as well as those all-important seven seats. Move up the range and there's luxuries such as Nissan's Safety Shield, intelligent park assist and heated leather seats.



KEA



FirstGEAR

Motoring news



Steering problem

THOUSANDS of Vauxhall owners have been warned not to drive their vehicles due to a steering problem.

Around 3,000 Adam and Corsa/Corsavan models registered since May 2014 had been manufactured with a steering system part that did not meet the company's specification.

Owners will be able to find out if their vehicle is affected by going to the Vauxhall website homepage (www.vauxhall.co.uk) and clicking on the 'Safety Check for ADAM and Corsa' button for further information.



Golf goes Alltrack

AHEAD of its debut at forthcoming Paris Motor Show, Volkswagen has released details on its new, rugged-looking Golf Alltrack.

Complementing its larger cousin, the Passat Alltrack, the Golf Alltrack boasts a slightly raised ride height, exterior body protection and all-wheel drive and comes with a TSI petrol engine or three diesel engines.

UK buyers can expect to see the car in showrooms next summer, with prices expected to be announced closer to the car's launch date.

Nissan X-Trail Tekna 1.6 dCi

Price: £29,295

Engine: 1.6-litre diesel unit producing 128bhp and 236lb/ft of torque

Transmission: Six-speed manual gearbox driving the front wheels

Performance: Top speed 117mph, 0-62mph in 10.5 seconds

Economy: 57.6mpg combined

Emissions: 129g/km of CO₂

The X-Trail has the kind of flexibility and appeal to suit a broad range of customers.

Families will love its ability to swallow children and luggage with ease and the fact they can bring their mates along too will be well received.

On the other hand if you're one of those 'active lifestyle' people you can jam it full of bicycles and surfboards, and in four-wheel drive guise it would make a good towing car, too.



£20m renewal fee

MOTORISTS are spending more than £20 million a year to replace lost, stolen or damaged driving licences, new figures reveal.

Data from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency showed 1,184,353 duplicate licences were issued in the financial year 2013/14. Drivers have to pay £20 for each copy.

The figures mean the equivalent of more than 3,000 replacements for lost, stolen, damaged or destroyed licences are being processed every day.

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Mrs Church

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Application form and job description can be found on

www.westheathschool.com or contact **Lynne McGrath** on:-

Email: **lynne.mcgrath@westheathschool.com** Tel: **01732 460 553**

Interviews will be held before half term

The successful applicant will be subject to an enhanced DBS check



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For an application form please contact
Tina Wiles, Town Clerk on **01303 893928**
or **Clerk@hawkingepc.org.uk**

Closing date for completed applications is
Friday 17th October 2014.

Interviews will be held shortly after the closing date.

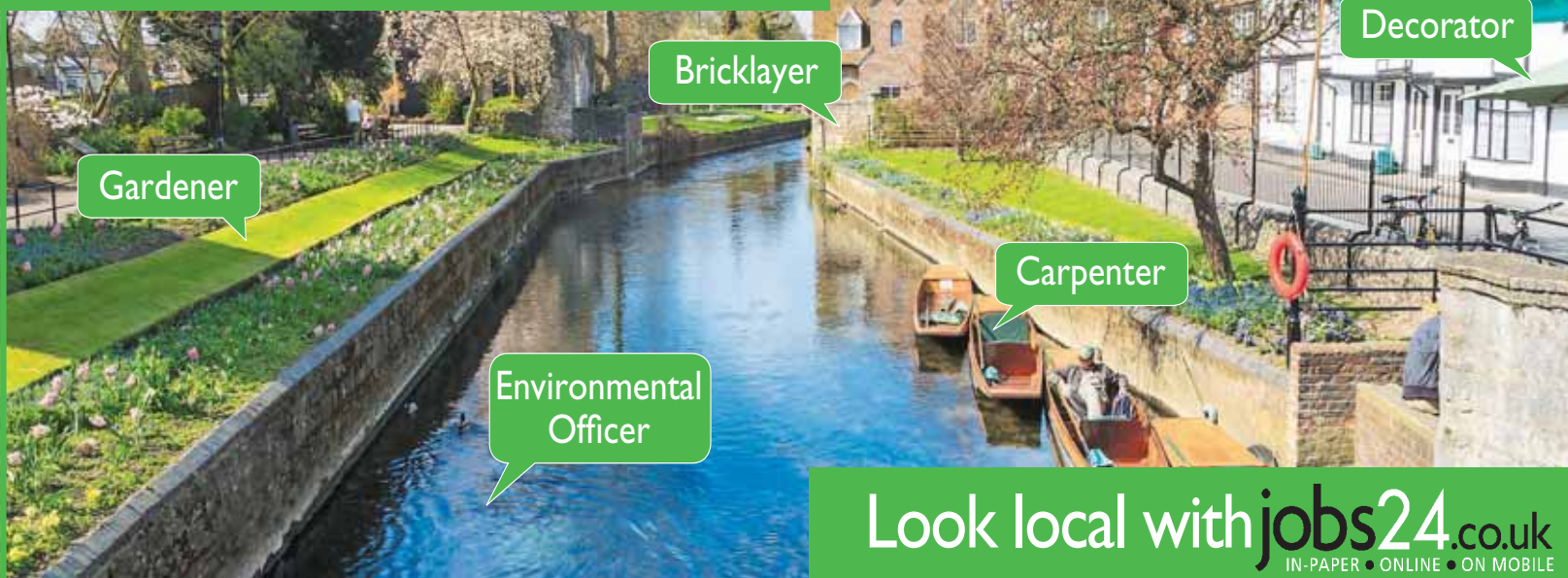
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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS 2013/14 NOTICE OF CERTIFICATION OF COMPLETION OF AUDIT



PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that under Regulation 11 of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 the District Auditor has completed the audit of the above accounts for the year ended 31 March 2014.

An unqualified opinion and the audit certificate on the accounts were issued by the External Auditor on the 26th September 2014. On the same date, the External Auditor issued an unqualified conclusion on the Authority's arrangements for securing value for money as required by the Audit Commission's Code of Practice. The Auditor has not identified any issues of public interest to report under Section 8 of the Audit Commission Act 1998.

In accordance with Section 14 of the 1998 Act, any local government elector for the area may:

- Inspect and make copies of the Statement of Accounts.
- Ask the Authority for a copy of the Statement of Accounts.

The Statement of Accounts is available for inspection by any local government elector for the area at Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PL, on weekdays (excluding public holidays) between 9.00am and 5.00pm. The accounts can also be found at:

<http://www.ashford.gov.uk/budgeting-accounts>

LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

Vigo Parish Council MAINTENANCE WORKS & LITTER PICKING ANNUAL CONTRACT April 2015 – March 2018 Vigo Village, Kent

Vigo Parish Council is looking for contractors for the Maintenance Works and Litter Picking of the communal land of Vigo Village, (a gross area of 55 hectares) including the Village Green. (Tree Work and Grass Cutting are not included, as they are covered by separate contracts). Tenderers will be required to supply their own equipment and include in their tender price the cost for all necessary labour and equipment. Examples of maintenance works include cutting back encroaching undergrowth at woodland and grass margins, leaf blowing of main paths in autumn, mowing and clearing of path margins, trimming/hedging shrubs, planting spring bulbs, painting metal benches and bollards, keeping paths clear from overhanging branches, daily inspection of Village and dealing with any issues that arise. This is not an exhaustive list.

The Litter Picking Contract will include the cleaning of some public areas (bus shelter and play park etc), clearing and gritting some paths during snow and ice, as well as a daily seven day a week litter pick.

The Tenderer can apply for the whole contract (maintenance AND litter picking) or separately for the maintenance works OR the litter picking.

Initial expressions of interest are requested and must be received no later than Friday 24th October 2014. Tender documents will be dispatched week beginning 27th October 2014 to selected tenderers with a return date of Friday 14th November 2014.

The persons / contractors invited to tender for the above works will be expected to make a written application including the following information:

- Name of Persons/Company, trading address, telephone number and contact name
- Details of similar works/contracts carried out, including client, value and location
- Details of company structure and resources
- Names and addresses of 3 referees from whom a reference may be sought regarding the contractor's experience and ability.

The Clerk, Vigo Parish Council, The Bay,
Vigo Village, Kent, DA13 0TD. 01732 823337
vigoparishcouncil@talktalkbusiness.net

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

THE HIGH PRESSURE CLEANING SPECIALIST LTD of 7 Spencer Close Walderslade Kent ME5 7RE is applying for a licence to use DS SMITH PAPER, KEMSLEY PAPER MILL, SITTINGBOURNE ME10 2TD as an operating centre for 2 goods vehicles and 0 trailers.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre who believe that their use of enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds LS9 6NF, stating their reasons within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

David Armstrong trading as Armstrong Haulage of 11 Medway Road, Crayford, Dartford, Kent DA1 4PN is applying to change an existing license as follows

To keep an extra 1 goods vehicle and 1 trailer at the operating centre at Albion Parade, Gravesend, Kent DA12 2RN

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's Office.

PLANNING



THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2010

The following applications have been submitted for consideration by the Council:

Y14/0991/SH - Rathely Granville Road East Sandgate Folkestone Kent - Erection of a single storey front extension with balcony above, together with other external alterations.

Y14/0872/SH+ - 100 High Street Hythe Kent CT21 5LE - Change of use from adult gaming centre to retail (Use Class A1)

Y14/1059/SH - Flat 1 The Haven 10 The Riviera Sandgate Folkestone Kent - Installation of new and replacement fenestration, new entrance steps and other external alterations.

Y14/0561/SH# - Marlie Farm Holiday Village Dymchurch Road New Romney Kent TN28 8UE - Change of use to allow operation of caravan park (including touring and static caravans and pitching of tents) for use between the period of 1st March and 14th February the following year.

Y14/1025/SH - 2 - 4 South Street Folkestone Kent CT20 1RW - Erection of bin store to serve adjacent restaurant.

Y14/1006/SH - 139 High Street Hythe Kent CT21 5JL - Change of use from A1 use (retail) to D1 use (Training/Education).

Y14/1064/SH - 63 High Street New Romney Kent TN28 8AL - Display of a non-illuminated fascia sign and a non-illuminated projecting hanging sign.

Any representations should be made in writing to the Head of Planning, Shepway District Council, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2QY or emailed to planning@shepway.gov.uk. Comments should be made in writing within 21 days from the date of publication. It should be noted that any representations received will be made available for public inspection.

Some applications can be viewed at other locations in addition to the Civic Centre, Folkestone. The applications are marked as follows:

- The One Stop Shop, Magpies, Church Approach, New Romney

+ - Hythe Town Council Offices, Stade Street, Hythe

Note: This is not a full list of applications received. All planning applications can be viewed and comments made online at <http://searchplanapps.shepway.gov.uk/online-applications/>.

The applications marked (*) do not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated.

C Lewis, Head of Planning
Shepway District Council

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In the first of two articles, **David Mairs** talks to Kent County Cricket Club chief executive Jamie Clifford

AS much as the appearance of their Canterbury home, The Spitfire Ground, St Lawrence, changes, one aspect of Kent County Cricket Club remains unrelentingly consistent: a glaring lack of trophies.

The Royal London One-Day Cup campaign was this season's playing highlight, the thrilling wins over Durham, Somerset and Gloucestershire stirring belief that finally here was a team that could be pulling itself out of the doldrums... at least until a crushing semi-final defeat to Warwickshire at Edgbaston.

A couple of different results in the NatWest T20 Blast could have seen them sneak through their group into the knockout stages, but the mini form of cricket is all ifs and buts, while Kent's final position in LV= County Championship Division Two, in which only three teams finished beneath them, does not lift the spirits for the winter ahead.

Sadly, the 2014 season was not a one-off. Since 1978, when they won the County Championship and the Benson & Hedges Cup and were unquestionably the best county team in the land, they have taken home just one T20 and two Sunday League titles.

It is a wretched record... the worst in the country, I tell Kent chief executive Jamie Clifford in his office overlooking the pitch at Canterbury.

He pulls a face and says he doesn't believe this to be correct, advising me that I shouldn't believe all I read on the internet.

Indeed, but it is a statistic to which we shall return.

Clifford has been a prime mover in what is surely one of the greatest periods of change the club – and certainly the ground – has seen.

He has been with Kent 12 years, the last four as chief executive. He joined as director of cricket, moved on to the role of commercial director and then acting chief executive before the big job was secured on a permanent basis.

His "great foot in the door to the world of cricket" was his position as marketing manager at Wisden.

"It was the wisden.com time," he said. "It was an exciting time."

He plays down his own cricketing abilities, saying he was an "enthusiastic" player for his home-town club of Broadstairs.

Aside from that, his knowledge of Kent developed as "a fan".

"We came over a lot as a family," he says. "It influences the way you do the job."

Being a mere 38 years old, Kent's "golden decade" of the 1970s, when they gathered a haul of trophies that would have today's supporters delirious in disbelieving delight, can only be reflected upon through the eyes of others.

"For me, it's a big motivator," he says. "I'm reminded about it all the time. It was such a defining era for the club and the players from it are revered to this day."

As we speak, Kent are playing the first of their final three matches of the County Championship campaign.

We're talking about how the sea-

The man charged with leading Kent to a new golden age of trophies



HOME SWEET HOME: The Spitfire Ground, St Lawrence, has seen huge change in recent years. Will its trophy cabinet soon be sporting the glint of silver?

son has gone and he points out that, with those three fixtures still to be played, there is still interest in how high up the table the club can finish.

Sadly, our conversation is punctuated at regular intervals on his mobile phone as 'pings' alert us to the clatter of Kent wickets as Essex enjoy very much the better of things at Chelmsford.

"I was going to go up there tomorrow," he says. It's depressingly clear that the journey won't be necessary and indeed just 11 minutes are needed for Essex to wrap things up the following morning.

Just one of cricket's little idiosyncrasies: surely to goodness, the match could be completed the evening it is so close to an obvious conclusion. But that's for another day.

The more pressing subject is Kent's 2014 season, another in which silverware has eluded the county.

"We plan for promotion and success in the T20 and One-Day Cup," says Clifford. "Ultimately we're judged on whether we achieve that. We expected more than we got."

"We're not walking away from the One-Day Cup semi-final saying what a great season. It wasn't a great season but, having said that, there were signs of progress. We've got home-grown players taking a role, for example, and that's important to us."

"So we're neither completely down and gloomy nor punching the air saying what a good season it's been."

"Nobody's saying that where we've got to is acceptable. We want nothing

other than a sustained period of success, but it will take a lot of hard work to get there."

He emphasises again the value of the county developing its own talent, something with which few supporters would argue.

"If you can get home-grown players, they understand what they're playing for," he says. "When we won the T20 [in 2007] it was largely done with imported players – not many were from Kent. There's been a change of direction since then."

There's an obvious pride in the club's development programme, which includes age groupings from under-11 level to under-17 and on to the academy. From there, the "very best" will be offered professional contracts.

"We've got the highest conversion rate from academy to first-team players in the country. We're as good as

“It might be a terribly old-fashioned view in modern sport, but we want to see a side representative of Kent. It's what Kent followers want”

Jamie Clifford,
on the value of home-grown talent

anyone and I'm happy to be challenged on that," he says.

"We've got a good academy director in Simon Willis – he's been involved with the club for 20 years. Like us all, he expects cricketers to come through the system and play a leading role in our team."

"It might be a terribly old-fashioned view in modern sport, or romantic, but we want to see a side that's representative of Kent. It's what Kent followers want to see."

"Of course, we want success as well, but if the core of our cricketers is Kentish, it all holds together better."

"The county has the second-highest population of recreational cricketers in the county – only Yorkshire has more – so we should have talented players."

Kent once played their cricket at grounds across the county, but, even allowing for the striking reduction in the number of venues, the spiritual home has always been Canterbury.

It is, though, not an ideal location for the more heavily populated north and west of the county, particularly, of course, metropolitan Kent, where the potential fan base is huge.

To that end, the development of the Beckenham ground is seen as almost critical if Kent really are to move to another level of competitiveness.

"The Beckenham plans are incredibly exciting," says Clifford. "We have a lot of ambition to grow in the west and metropolitan areas of the county and hopefully people will see this as a sign of that ambition."

"Once you include the four London boroughs [Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich and Lewisham], you almost double the Kent population, especially in terms of talented players."

"Beckenham will give us a base from which to develop those players."

The desire to bring on Kentish talent, metropolitan or otherwise, is laudable, but a top-drawer overseas player can still prove the difference between a winning team and a collection of also-rans.

With so many competitions across the globe throughout the year, however, today's game is very different to that when many of the greatest players in the world graced the English county scene throughout the summer. How does Clifford see Kent embracing both the challenge and the opportunity?

"It's not like the old days. There are so many variables, so many moving parts. There's asking price, availability throughout the season and so on."

"Where it's so different, though, is that, formerly, English cricket represented the main earning opportunity for world-class players. That clearly is not the case now."

"We've been lucky in that we had Doug [Bollinger] for most of the season and in all formats, while Brendan Nash has also been available, but by and large that sort of player doesn't exist any more."

The recruitment of an overseas player unfolds essentially in one of two ways. Either an agent can tout a cricketer to the counties in the hope

about bringing back the sweet taste of success to St Lawrence



EYES FORWARD: As much a fan as a chief executive, Jamie Clifford envisages a day when Kent will be winning titles on a regular basis

that enough will be interested to put in competitive bids, or a county will engage an agent to head out on its behalf and bring in a player that is needed to provide the missing link in a potentially successful team.

Or, in the case of Bollinger, an exchange of texts with Kent captain Rob Key results in him pitching up at St Lawrence for the season.

The stated ambition at Kent is strong and it entails both playing and commercial success. It is of course the latter arena in which Clifford sees himself as making all the difference at a club that hasn't seen much of either for far too long.

"When I came in, we lacked a commercial edge. It could now be viewed as horribly commercial, but without it you won't have playing success – it's as simple as that," he says.

"It doesn't stop with building a business. Success on the field drives that and any money we make goes

“When I came in, we lacked a commercial edge. It could now be viewed as horribly commercial, but without it you won't have playing success”

Jamie Clifford,
on getting the business side right

the attainment of success. Players' salaries, for example, go up because we're all competing for talent.

"Behind a successful club sports club is a successful business. The question is how we go after that success."

It is sometimes suggested that professional sport can be too much about

the money, with a loss of focus on the playing side of things, but Clifford insists that is not the case at Kent.

"The commercial considerations are there to support our primary purpose, which is bringing silverware back to the county."

We'd all raise a glass to that but, until cups are actually making their way to the St Lawrence trophy cabinet, how much faith are supporters to hold? Indeed, should they not be more demanding? Are they too understanding, too easily pleased?

"It doesn't feel like that," says Clifford. "There are forums and it doesn't feel like we're getting an easy ride. If a player troops off the pitch early in the game with a low score, there's a pretty clear feeling around the ground."

"People do have strong feelings and they make them known."

■ The second part of this interview with Jamie Clifford is in next week's Kent on Sunday

KEA

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Hause chosen for England under-20s in Dutch contest

GILLINGHAM defender Kortney Hause has been selected for the England under-20 squad.

Coach Aidy Boothroyd named Hause, who is at Priestfield on loan from Wolverhampton Wanderers, in his 23-man group for a mini-tournament in The Netherlands.

England are due to play Germany, The Netherlands and Turkey in the competition at Heerenveen.

The squad is gathering at St George's Park today (Sunday) before flying out tomorrow.

Hause has scored once in his 12 appearances for the Gills this season. His selection by Boothroyd is his first England call-up.

England under-20s should be in confident mood for the tournament, having beaten Romania 6-0 last month. The quality of opposition, though, is likely to be higher.



CALL: Kortney Hause



NO STOPPING 'EM NOW: Runners in this year's Folkestone half-marathon

Collins romps home four minutes clear

TOM Collins from Medway & Maidstone has won the ninth Folkestone Rotary Half Marathon.

He won in a time of one hour and 14 minutes, four minutes clear of Robert Latala in second place, who was followed by Terry Reeves from Dartford Road Runners in third place.

First lady home was Liz Weeks from Sittingbourne Striders with a time of one hour and 24 minutes. Second lady was Sarah Gruber, with Cathy Newman in third place.

Both race winners received £100, courtesy of sponsor Independent Insurance Services.

There were more than 580

registrations, which was up on last year, and there was superb weather for the event.

This year's proceeds will benefit local and international charities through the work of Folkestone Rotary Club, with the main beneficiaries being Step Short and The Gurkha Memorial Fund.

Race director Ray Johnson said: "This year was extra-special as the participants run under the new Memorial Arch and we have now achieved more than £250,000 for good causes since the race started in 2006."

The event will return on Sunday, September 27, 2015.

Kent seniors look to defend their title

KENT'S golfers will this week look to maintain dominance in the English Seniors County Championship.

Kent have won the title on five of the nine previous occasions it has been played and are the current champions.

The tournament will be played at Hindhead Golf Club, Surrey, from

Tuesday to Thursday (October 7-9).

Kent team: Philip Bramall (Chart Hills), Ross Galgut (Littlestone), Bruce Hilsdon (Littlestone), Chris Hurst (Pedham Place), Dave Jessup (Wrotham Heath), Richard Partridge (Wilderness), Chris Reynolds (Littlestone) and David Weighton (Littlestone)

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